

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY™

Zelda 64 & Parasite Eve Lead

the RPG revolution

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NBA Courtside • Einhänder • WarGames • Ehrgeiz
Mega Man Legends • Yoshi's Story • Wario Land II
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May 1998

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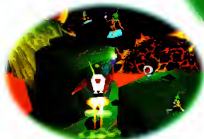
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106

Some superhero. He doesn't even know the definition of fearless and courageous.



No x-ray eyes.
No fancy-schmancy
belt. What's so
special about
this guy?



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ESRB
RATED
FOR
EVERYONE



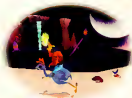


Why does this wise-guy
get all the glory?

A superhero
should eat
his protein.
Not ride
around on it.



What kind of
superhero hangs
around with
floozyes?



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the smell of bacon is that much sweeter.



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Change is Good

By John Davison • john_davison@zd.com

As you look through the magazine this month, you may notice one or two changes around here that you won't have seen before. For a start...who the hell is this guy? A new editor in chief? After some considerable time without anyone at the helm of EGM full time, the post is now filled...by me. Hello. You may have seen my name discreetly slipped into the masthead last month (I arrived in the States fresh from the U.K. just as our Tekken 3 issue went to press), but this has been my first full month working on the longest-running and best video game magazine in the world.

So are things going to change much around here? Well...just a little—and to be honest the changes that will become apparent in the coming months are simply a reflection of the way the game industry is evolving. As has been said before in these editorial pages, as our industry continues to grow at the current startling level, we need to reflect the changes that occur. Financially we are already in the realms of the music industry... but as time goes on, I have every faith that video games will continue to mimic the movie industry in terms of both production values and blockbuster release patterns. How long before we see the gaming equivalent of Titanic? Can things change so quickly that we'll see games taking a billion dollars worldwide?

In the meantime though, we're going to see more short-term, but still fairly important moves in the industry. For example, in the coming months we will see Sega re-invent itself with its new machine—the as-yet-unnamed "Katana" project is scheduled for a Japanese release before the end of the year. Hopefully we'll also see Sega flexing its franchising muscles by announcing products along the lines of the latest incarnation of Sonic or maybe even home versions of Rally 2 and Virtua Fighter 3. Even further down the line, how about House of the Dead 2, Virtua Cop 3 or even Daytona 2? Who knows?

Elsewhere we'll see Nintendo continue to acknowledge the Game Boy as the most successful video game product of all time with yet another revision to the standard package in the shape of the Game Boy Pocket Light. We will also see the Big N make a decision about the global release of the much-anticipated 64DD and any associated game releases. Super Mario 2 anyone?

On top of this, Sony is taking a bold step into the handheld market with the PlayStation memory card-based PDA whilst at the same time actively encouraging both first- and third-party developers to push the envelope with the existing technology. Games using the PlayStation's Hi-res Mode shifting polygons at high frame rates will continue to amaze—pushing the system above and beyond anything that anyone ever expected of it.

Elsewhere both software technology and content issues will be addressed comprehensively. In this issue alone we have early shots of games that push the envelope technologically on the existing formats: Konami's Castlevania 64, Crystal Dynamics' Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, Nintendo's Zelda: Ocarina of Time and Square's Parasite Eve all push their respective systems in terms of sheer processing requirements.

Our main cover feature tackles, amongst other things, the changing tastes of consumers for the actual content of a game. Little more than a year ago, RPGs were big in Japan—but as far as Western tastes were concerned they were nothing more than fringe, "enthusiast"-led products, often only seeing the light of day on import. With the release of Final Fantasy VII last year, though, they have become "acceptable" and mainstream. After years of fighting games dominating the video game market, we are seeing the emergence of a high-profile genre—a genre that is no longer stuck in the traditional swords and sorcery days of yore. Believe me, 1998 is the year of the RPG and our feature illustrates how the big games this year will mix traditional RPG fare with science fiction, horror, mysticism, action and even other more adult themes. Gaming is growing up...high-quality storytelling is moving to the forefront of design and games are increasing in quality at an exponential rate.

Change is good...and Electronic Gaming Monthly will continue to evolve to ensure we stay on top of changes as they occur.

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Rule #1
You never want to be on
somebody else's poster.

You're in the pros now baby. Kobe Bryant's NBA Courtside. Hyped by N64.[®] So all the players got mad skills. And butter moves. Just like they do in the NBA. It's legit. You can feel it. You. Plus three other ballers. But you better represent. Because the last thing you want. Is somebody like Kobe putting shame in your game.



Kobe Bryant's
NBA
COURTSIDE



EA GAMES
N64

EA GAMES
N64

EA GAMES
N64

EA GAMES
N64



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Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver puts you in control of a jawless, soul-sucking vampire freak. (pg. 62)

The RPG Revolution

Not only does it feature a hottie named Aya, *Parasite Eve* is also one of the most innovative RPGs to date. What other upcoming games in the genre are going the same route? Find out on page 78.



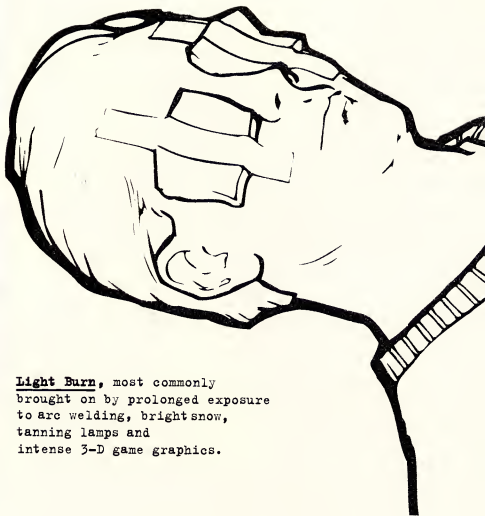
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Shining Force III - SAT



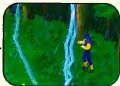
Dinst 64 - N64



Light Burn, most commonly brought on by prolonged exposure to arc welding, bright snow, tanning lamps and intense 3-D game graphics.

To receive playing tips and reduce your chances of light burn, call the Eidos Hint Line (900) 773-4367.

Cost of call: 50¢/minute. Must be 18 years or have parent's permission. Touch tone phone required.



Light burn. It's the silent injury. Severe pain may not occur until up to six hours after initial exposure to Eidos games like Deathtrap Dungeon and Ninja. At which point, despite all protests, the player must stop playing and be put to rest in a darkened room. Because it's all fun and gameplay until someone loses an eye.

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You've been warned.

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Compiled by: Shoe

Letter of the Month

Gettin' Respect

Have you noticed that the video game industry doesn't seem to get half the respect it deserves? A lot of people don't realize how quick and complex this industry is growing. Heck, video games are rivaling motion pictures in the entertainment business, such as when you guys showed how Final Fantasy VII had grossed more dollars than the film *G.I. Jane*. And to think, a lot of people still express the notion that video games are merely a silly form of entertainment for children. How can people not take video gaming seriously? We give them the magazines. We give them the commercials (some hilarious ones, I might add). Heck, we even give them the movies. What more can you do to get people's attention?

But the thing that really annoys me is when people think video games are for kids. Most, if not all of the adult-oriented game genres require a considerable amount of thought and intelligence to complete. I mean, what 5-year-old can even come close to completing half of any RPG out there? The video game industry, with its developers, publishers, magazines and gamers in general, deserve a great deal of respect for what they do and what they have accomplished.

Skawn Arterburn—Los Lunas, NM

It'll take quite a while for people to see that video games aren't just for kids. It's hard when the public isn't familiar with anything beyond Mario, Sonic and Crash. When people think of video games, they don't exactly think of Alucard or Kain.

That's OK, because a lot of video games are for kids. We can't expect to change people's minds about an industry that is heavily geared toward younger folks. After all, youngsters are dragging their parents into Best Buy to get a Nintendo 64 and not a DVD player.

But who cares if people think we're dealing with kids' stuff? We'd much rather be working in this "childish" industry than be working anywhere else. We'd like to see how many "grown-ups" have as much fun as we're having.

So go ahead and let people think video games are for kids. We'd rather sit around and play GoldenEye or Bomberman with our friends than play Cribbage at the old folks' home.

Wouldn't you?



Congratulations. You win an InterAct controller. You will be receiving a Barcode (PS), an Eclipse Stick (SAT) or a Shark-Pad Pro 64 (N64).

Dear Mr. Arterburn, Thank you for your letter. We are sorry that you feel that the video game industry is not getting the respect it deserves. We are glad to hear that you are a fan of Final Fantasy VII and that you are interested in the industry. We will do our best to provide you with the information you need. We are sorry that you feel that the industry is geared towards younger folks. We are glad to hear that you are a fan of GoldenEye and Bomberman. We will do our best to provide you with the information you need. We are sorry that you feel that the industry is geared towards younger folks. We are glad to hear that you are a fan of GoldenEye and Bomberman. We will do our best to provide you with the information you need.

EGM Letters gives you the chance to praise, gripe, whine, speculate or simply reflect. EGM will discuss some of today's top issues in the video game industry. If you have a subscription inquiry or problem, please contact our subscription department at (800) 865-0930 or by going to <http://subscriptions.egm.com/service> on the Web. Writing the editorial staff about your subscription concerns is faster. Note: EGM cannot and will not personally respond to any letters. We reserve the right to edit any correspondence for space purposes. You can reach EGM by writing to:

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They Ain't Street Fighters

Is it just me, or are fighting games getting blander by the year? The tacky, slow, boring, gimmicky and almost insulting Virtua Fighter started it all back in 1994. I remember how it sat between Mortal Kombat II and Super Street Fighter II Turbo (two of the true classics) at my local arcade, looking like someone's idea of a joke, but nevertheless, collecting its fair share of quarters. Since then, we've seen 2D fighters take a back burner to more Virtua Fighters, Tekkens, Soul Edges/Blades and a host of clones loaded with more glitzy moves than you'll ever actually use. And the 2D fighters themselves? I've never been very impressed with Capcom's post SSF2 Turbo fighting games with their plushy Saturday-morning cartoon graphics.

But worst of all are the characters. The Tekken games are overflowing with rip-off. Paul Phoenix is a blond American martial artist, and one of his outfits is a red karate uniform. Sound familiar Street Fighter fans? (Now for my David Spade impression)...I liked Marshal Law better...when he was called Bruce Lee (or Fei Long, depending on your point of view).

Joe Mossman—Brockville, ONT, Canada



If you think Tekken characters lack originality, wait 'till you see the cast of Fighters Destiny. The game stars a Middle Eastern warrior named Abdul, a French down named Pierre and a ninja named...guess what? Ninja. Our favorite character from Fighters Destiny, however, is Bob. Yes...Bob.

Bright Idea

I liked your "Don't you hate it when..." and your "Coolest part..." comments in your Top 100 games list so much, I thought it'd be great if you could run a small section where readers could send in their agonies and triumphs of their favorite games!

Examples from me: Don't you hate it in Resident Evil when you make it to a save room by the skin of your teeth, only to find out you ran out of ink ribbons? Or, the coolest part of Castlevania: Symphony of the Night is finally getting the Soul of Bat so you can reach all the new areas? Oh, and one last one: Don't you hate having to start Star Fox 64 from the beginning every single game? I'd trade that Rumble Pak for a save game feature any day!

See? I feel better already! What do you guys think of my idea?

Troy White—Abilene, Texas

We think it's a great idea. In fact, these questions sound like excellent candidates for Questions of the Moment (please always feel free to send in more ideas for Q of the Moment). How about a "Don't you hate it when..." this month?

Too Much Z

What the heck is wrong with you? In issue #504, in the Letter Art section, you said you didn't want any more Dragon Ball Z letter art. I am a DBZ fan, and I want to see DBZ art in your magazine. I subscribe to EGM because you guys are good, but now I see that you guys mess up once in a while.

David Avecllas—Belleville, NJ

The reason we asked for non-Dragon Ball Z (and non-Lara Croft) letter art is because that's all we seem to get nowadays. A little variety once in a while wouldn't hurt, right?

Revealing outfits and the undead. What else can't most young guys get enough of? Calcium. But there is a mouth-watering solution. Milk. It can help provide the calcium growing bones need to stay strong. A real must. Especially if you plan on sticking your neck out.

MILK

Where's your mustache?™



egm letters

Astrod Lives...

I made Astrod! The game is made in Klik and Play, and it includes both Astrod Classic and Astrod 2000. I basically made it as a joke. The URL is: <http://www.fortunecity.com/skyscraper/eudora/172/>. It's freeware, so anyone can have it. Have fun!

Travis Skare—travis123@geocities.com

Well, it's a different Astrod 2000 from the one we previewed last issue, but hey...Astrod is Astrod (Mr. Skare's version was actually created before our preview of Monkeyshine's version saw print). If you have a PC, try out Astrod today.

In your April issue, you incorrectly stated that Astrod 2000 is an update to Astrod. Actually the original game takes place in the year 2045. Also, you guys got your dates screwed up! Astrod was released in 1986 as an answer to the popular SpaceInvaders [sic] released by Technie entertainment after Enliffe Int. filed for bankruptcy.

Jesse Langankl—MACOP@prodigy.net

OK, I happen to have worked at Wal-Mart for two years, and I can positively tell you that the arcade file says that NO update for Astrod will ever be released. Therefore, your page 62 preview for Astrod 2000 [Issue #105] must be an April Fools' joke. I am sure about this. I have contacted the publisher, Monkeyshine, and they said that because of the game's failure on the Odyssey 2000, they will not be releasing any more Astrod titles.

Chris Calvert—clowf@mindspring.com

In the past years, your April Fools' jokes were indeed interesting, with Sheng Long being by far the best. But on page 62 of this April's issue, you sure did outdo yourselves. As if the readers from the two previous months (Mr. Astrod: Desmond Johnson, Jr. and Mr. Saturn Rings: Eddie McIntosh) haven't suffered enough, you lay the final blow, turning their horrible lack of arcade history (even with the Wal-Mart arcade file) into a freak show for the EGM world to see.

I love it! Those screen shots are the best—absolute genius! Live long Monkeyshine! May Astrod 2000 rule the cosmos!

Tim McConnell—tmconn@freenet.columbus.oh.us

OK, OK. We really do have to put this Astrod business to rest. It has gone on for far too long (but it was a fun ride!). Pretty soon, new and casual EGM readers aren't going to know what the hell we're talking about (In fact, we're not even sure many regular EGM readers know what the hell we're talking about). So if you're tired of hearing about Astrod, don't worry. We're done dragging this one out! And to think, all of this came out of one innocent little misspelling (see EGM #903, page 14 if you want to see where it all got started).

By the way, if you think Astrod is the April Fools' joke, then you've missed something (you may want to check out the fine print on page



Astrod 2000 (by Skare)...



...and Astrod 2000 (by Monkeyshine Interactive). Which is the real deal?

120 of last month's issue for a hint). We're a bit sneakier than you give us credit for!

Video Games And TVs

I would like to publically thank Sony Computer Entertainment America for releasing PaRappa the Rapper in the U.S. It is a game for everyone, no matter what their gender, race or lifestyle orientation is.

I am, of course, referring to Moosellini, the cross-dressing moose on Level 2. Everyone knows that only male moose have antlers, yet Moosellini sounds decisively feminine and wears a skirt. I applaud Sony for portraying this moose with an alternative lifestyle in such a positive light. I hope other companies can follow their example.

Chris Hoffman—Goleta, CA

Pretty good observation! No one's really thought of Moosellini in this light before, not even his/her father, to whom we showed this letter. "I didn't know he was a cross-dresser!" said a laughing Rodney Greenblat, the multimedia artist who created the PaRappa cast. "But...why not? I think that'd be great! I wasn't really aware of this, but I guess it could be true." As for PaRappa

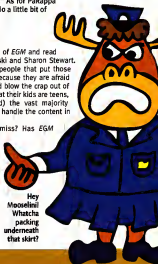
2...we trust Mr. Greenblat will do a little bit of research this time around.

Parenthood

OK, I just got my April issue of EGM and read the letters from Bonita Grabinski and Sharon Stewart. What? Are these the kind of people that put those blocken-things on their TVs because they are afraid their kids might see Elmer Fudd blow the crap out of Daffy Duck? Really, they said that their kids are teens, and (as far as I'm concerned) the vast majority of teens are mature enough to handle the content in the magazine.

Pomography? What did I miss? Has EGM started printing pictures of Lara Croft and Crash Bandicoot, er, "going at it" so to speak? These people are just too damned overprotective of their kids. They're probably going to grow up, single and living with their parents at 34, doing nothing but eating Bon Bons and watching talk shows all day. Et no wall, the Bon Bons are evil...

ToxicTrash@aol.com



Hey Moosellini! Watcha pecking underneath that skirt?

Question of the Moment

What do you think Sega needs to do to make their next system a success?

Make sure you have plenty of RAM. Make the modem available at launch. Get the people who made the original SEGA commercials back. Get exclusive games from: EA, Konami, Capcom, Travellers Tales, Eldos, Midway, Crystal Dynamics and of course, Working Designs.
anlme333@juno.com

The only way Sega is going to make their new system sell is if they let Nintendo market the system for them.
PELUDO@aol.com

Four words for you SEGA: Take your time, please.
skywalker6791@hotmail.com

I want to see Sega listen to their fans and actually release the types of games we want for this new system. It would definitely save all the hardcore Sega fans like me the effort of importing cool, but expensive games.
soulfox@concentric.net

Sega's next system must be programmer-friendly in order to have larger support from third-party companies. Incorporating the Windows OS will be a big push in the right direction because many PC games can be easily ported over.
Centroz7@aol.com

Next Month's Question of the Moment: Don't You Hate It When...? Give us some of your least favorite moments in video gaming. Send your short (very short, please), but sweet, responses to: EGM_Mail@zd.com with the subject heading: HATE

Ninja School Class of '98



Drama Club



Crossing Guard



Math Club



Glee Club



Marching Band



Debate Team



Wood Shop



Voted most likely to star in his own video game



French Club



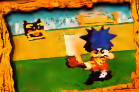
Book Club



AV Squad



Yearbook Staff



Explore a seemingly limitless 3-D world of bewildering labyrinths, monstrous caves, underwater caverns and even Mt. Fuji and a coffee shop or two.



Even the biggest, meanest, ugliest, most dreadful mechanical boss is destined for the scrap heap once Goemon jumps into his supercharged mech.



As any one of our four characters, you've got people to meet and places to go to find the clues that'll help you acquire the special powers and keys you need to complete your quest.



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I was just writing to inform you there are some parents who actually like EGM. When I get an EGM magazine, my mom always says, "Hey, I want to find a good game that I can buy for you." I think the parents in issue #505 need to lighten up. For crying' out loud, these are drawings! If your kid is getting that excited over Lara Croft, then something is probably wrong with him. Besides, how do you think the companies are gonna get their messages across anyway?

Nimr69@aol.com

Morons. When I say that, I am referring to Bonita Grabinski and Sharon Stewart in issue #105's Letters section. Personally, I think your magazine is very well organized and written, but to go as far as to say pornographic, sick and sexually explicit, I would think not. It appears to me that if these "problems" continue to bother these people, they should cancel their subscription and quit buying your magazine. Some people might find ads like the Spawn ad referred to in Mrs. Stewart's letter offensive, but I assure you the majority of your readers do not. They find these ads amusing, not offensive.

Aoxspidey@aol.com

You EGM readers find bloody amputated limbs amusing? You people are so evil gross.

100 Percent Sarcasm

I have been receiving your magazine for 5 1/2 years now. I want to explain a concern that I have with your magazine. I am a teenager. I like your magazine. The problem is the offensive pictures you draw of women. They are not explicit enough, and they unrealistically portray the female body. Every time your magazine arrives, I take a felt tip pen and draw in what is covered by "clothes" on the women.

Please realize that your cartooning is considered pornographic to me and that I really get off on this kind of artwork. I enjoy your magazine, and I do not want to cancel my subscription. I want you to be more sensitive to your porn-reading audience. I buy your magazine because of the sexy pictures in it. It is not necessary to expose me to articles and information.

I know that if I am of this mind set, many other people are as well. As I said, I do not want to cancel my subscription, but I must pleasure myself. Please add more drawings;

[censored]

Matt Bowers—SlideLL, LA

Ah...we're just full of inside jokes and references. If you don't quite get Mr. Bowers' letter, or you're not sure why we called all of you "evil gross" check out last month's Letters section.

PaRappa The Rapper Warning

Caution: PaRappa the Rapper may cause some people to look like utter idiots while attempting to rap and dance along with the game when they have no business trying to rap and dance in the first place.

Kel B.—breakinc@agt.net

It's true, it's true! We're so lame!

A Salute To Obscure References

Chris Johnston sure knows his great documentaries. Who would think the title of his article, "Fast, Cheap and Out of Control" on page 22 of the April EGM would be named after a

disturbing and haunting documentary about people who want to control nature—one of the best documentaries of the decade?

Anthony Ahn—Gaitthersburg, MD

Heh...the rest of us didn't even catch that reference. It just goes to show how little we understand our News editor's disturbed and haunting mind.

For The Record

I just happened to be leafing through issue #105, and found myself heartily enjoying the Camper's Knife review (I too know the ease of living brought on by owning a utility knife...). After reading through the entire article, something came to my attention. Mr. Boyer mentioned that "...it fails to impress the local mall chicks," yet, in the next Review Crewer's square, it was insinuated that the knife could, in fact, impress women, and further on, in Mr. Smith's commentary, he stated outright that "...it also helped me pick up a few chicks last weekend."

Now, for the sake of the reputation of the knife, let the record show that it was obviously not the fault of the knife that Mr. Boyer failed to rate highly with the ladies at the mall, and that, although it is pure conjecture at the current moment, it may well be Mr. Boyer himself that creates this unpopularity with the females, also possibly connected with the sightings of him fondling the buttocks of his very own clones.

Tell me, is it justice that such a great thing as the knife should suffer and otherwise be defamed as a result of the shortcomings of one lonely and disturbed man?

edible_corpse@yahoo.com

Damnit! Is this a roundabout way of accusing us of bias?

OOPS

Last month, we accidentally credited the cover art to Peter Franco. The cover was actually drawn by Dhabih Eng. Peter Franco painted the Tekken 3 artwork inside (on page 80). Our apologies to Mr. Eng. While we're on the subject of Tekken 3...we said Tekken 3 would hit stores on April 30. Unfortunately, April 30 is the ship date, meaning the game won't be in stores until May 1 at the earliest.

Letter Art

Where creativity, your favorite video game and a stamp can make you immortal!

WINNER

Darryl Taylor
Louisville, KY

Congratulations, your prize is on the way—an ASCII Specialized Control Pad for the PlayStation. It features rapid-fire controls for all buttons and slow motion for those intense moments.



Close, but no controller



Justin Reed
Cherokee, NC



Shu-Kuan Yao
Toano, VA



Keith Ellwood
Providence, RI

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VIGILANTE 8ES

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It's Crazy.

Press Start

The hottest gaming news on the planet, brought to you by videogames.com

Power Play

After nine years, the Game Boy shows no sign of slowing down

In the world of handheld gaming, Nintendo's Game Boy is king. Originally introduced in 1989, the Game Boy was propelled to success due largely in part to its first title, Tetris. In the years that followed, the Game Boy went up against competition from Sega, Atari and others, emerging victorious each time—even when up against color screens and flashier graphics. Still going strong, the only competitor Nintendo has nine years after the Game Boy originally launched is Tiger's Game.com.

But with 32- and 64-bit systems now the norm, the 8-bit Game Boy may be underpowered, yet it still dominates the market, almost unchallenged. Surprising? "I think if you allow yourself to get immersed in the technology of what this business is, then yeah, you're surprised," Steve Lux, vice president of marketing for Acclaim Entertainment told us. "Six years ago if someone had said that six years from now you'll be on 64-bit systems, Pentiums that run at 333 MHz and you'll still have Game Boy you probably would've said, 'I don't think so.'"

Nintendo's original plan may not have been for the Game Boy to last this long, but the fact that it has is a testimonial to Gunpei Yokoi's fantastic design of the machine.

The release of the Game Boy Pocket in 1996 and its variety of colors a year later created another surge in the system's popularity. At the time of the Game Boy Pocket Colors launch, Peter Main, Nintendo of America's vice president of sales and marketing, said, "Game Boy just

gets better with age." Maybe he was onto something. Having sold more than 50 million units worldwide, the launch of different colors was just icing on Nintendo's cake. Since that time, two limited-edition colors, gold and ice blue, have been introduced to impressive sales.

Is the Game Boy's black-and-white screen really that much of a disadvantage anyway? Lux doesn't think so. "It's like watching a good old black-and-white movie. Two minutes into it, you don't really think that it's no longer color; you're in the middle of battle."

After the second resurgence in 1997 with the Pocket Colors line, Nintendo began rereleasing their older titles so new GB owners could partake, joining in on the idea, companies like Acclaim, THQ and Surssoft were soon releasing titles too, like Disney's library of GB games and the Final Fantasy Legend series. This year, the U.S. will be exposed to the most popular Game Boy game ever—Pokemon, which will be making its debut in North America in the fall.

The Game.com, released in 1997, is the Game Boy's current competition, and Tiger respects Nintendo as a credible competitor. Set with a lineup of software for 1998 that includes games based on major Hollywood films and licenses plus a handful of original games, the Game.com could be hitting its stride this year. "Nintendo isn't approaching the marketplace



The Challengers



Atari Lynx - 1989
The first color portable, the Lynx had a 16-bit graphics processor and you could link up as many as eight systems together for multiplayer

games like Battle Wheels.
Died: Lack of software support, higher price
Original Price: \$169

Turbo Express - 1991

The first portable to play home games on the road, it used TurboGrafix HuCards and had a super-sharp backlight screen and an optional TV tuner so you could watch the game on the go.
Died: High price, death of TurboGrafix
Original Price: \$399



Sega Game Gear - 1991

Basically a portable Master System, the Game Gear had a fairly big library of 8-bit games, all in color. The price tag on the system is what killed it.
Died: Lack of software, price
Original Price: \$149



Preparing For Launch

Sega revs up its launch campaign for the next system

Sega's next system, whether it's called Katana or Dural, has generated a lot of interest among Sega fans. With the Tokyo Game Show in sight, it won't be long before we know more concrete details on the system. Here's the latest:

Ready for Launch

Sega of America COO Bernie Stolar told a trade magazine that the September 1999 launch in the U.S. will be backed by a \$100 million-plus marketing campaign.

"Sony has never gone through the downward curve and I assure you they will," Stolar told *BrandWeek* magazine. "We will recapture the 50 percent market share [versus 5 percent now] because we will have the third-party community back, along with competitive pricing, [and] full retail distribution." In the same report, Stolar confirmed the system will launch with 50-75 titles, with 30-40 total planned for release by the end of 1999.

Coin-operated Katana

A report from Japan in mid-February stated that Sega Enterprises is planning to unveil a low-cost, high-performance arcade board this

summer, utilizing the same Hitachi-built processor the Katana will have.

The board will cost almost half of what the Model 3 does, and offers a 20-30 percent increase in graphics performance, with the ability to move over 1 million polygons per second.

Toward the Millennium

Newly appointed Sega Enterprises Ltd. President Shouchinuo Irimajiri spoke to some of the major Japanese gaming magazines, giving them some insight into the company's future plans.

"Technologically speaking, the consumer, arcade and PC markets are closer than they've been before. I want to steer Sega in a direction an entertainment company in the 21st century should be headed."

Admitting that the Saturn's showing in the U.S. was much less than that in Japan, Irimajiri says that Sega Enterprises will continue supporting the Saturn in Japan anyway after the next system has been released. "We have 5 million users out there, and a responsibility to continue to support Saturn. We'll release a certain amount of titles for it—we want Saturn users to continue enjoying their Saturns."

www.sega.com



same way we are," says Sandra Schneider, vice president of Tiger Interactive. Features of the system Tiger plans to promote in a big way

Sega already tried to with the Game Gear. Sony, while they do have an entry into the handheld market (see our International News for more

If Nintendo, Sony or Sega released a color portable for under \$100, would you buy it?



source: videogames.com poll 3/3/98

isn't broken, that would tack on a sizable addition to the system's "under \$50" price tag?

www.nintendo.com, www.sega.com

this year include its internet connectivity and the ability of gamers to post high scores and download codes through the Web. There's even a Giga Pet cartridge coming to the Game.com, likely in time for Nintendo's impending U.S. Pokemon invasion.

Could Sony or Sega enter the portable market and defeat Nintendo at their own game?

Game.com - 1997

A game machine and a personal digital assistant of sorts, the Game.com is a black-and-white portable that can also access the Internet.

Alive and kicking: New games are planned for '98. Original Price: \$69 (now \$49)



Nomad - 1995

A portable Genesis. While the screen was nothing to shout about and RPGs and games with a lot of text were sorta hard to play, this is a cool idea.

Died: Price, death of Genesis. Original Price: \$199



Tidbits...

5 Million Bandicoots

Sony Computer Entertainment America says that its mascot, Crash Bandicoot, and his two games for the PlayStation have together sold 5 million units worldwide. According to Sony, Crash is his now the only PlayStation franchise sold in North America to have hit over a million units sold of both the original game and its sequel (take that Lara and REI!).

The original Crash Bandicoot, released in 1996, sold 1.5 million units in the U.S., 650,000 in Japan and 725,000 in Europe. Its sequel, released last year, has sold 1 million units in the U.S., 800,000 in Japan, and 340,000 units in Europe. Those numbers are for the game's life to date, as of Feb. 27.

Get Some Clay...Again

Interplay announced that it is releasing a special edition of *ClayFighter 63 1/3* for the Nintendo 64 called *ClayFighter Sculptor's Cut*. This version includes brand-new characters, moves, taunts and improved camera angles for a better overall feel (why didn't they just do this from the beginning?).

New characters include Lockjaw Pooch, High Five, The Zappa Yow Yow Boyz and Lady Liberty. Several of these characters were shown in concept drawings and pictures of the game during development.

Gamers may remember that Interplay had a similar deal with Blockbuster a few years ago on the Super Nintendo with *ClayFighter: Tournament Edition*, an enhanced version of the original *ClayFighter* game.

The game will be available for rent at Blockbuster Video exclusively, beginning this April; it will not be available separately for sale.

Hasbro To Buy Game.com Maker

The two companies announced an agreement that will see Hasbro take over the operating assets of Vernon Hills, Illinois-based Tiger and its affiliates.

Hasbro will pay approximately \$335 million for the company, "subject to certain closing adjustments, plus the value at closing of inventory, tooling, equipment and certain prepaid assets," Hasbro said in a statement. The handover should be completed early in the second quarter.

Hasbro already owns the rights to the Playskool, Kenner, Tonka, OddzOn, SuperSoaker, Milton Bradley and Parker Brothers brands.

Midway Offers N64 Values

Midway is launching a special *Game.com Select Value Price* program for a few of its older N64 titles. The new program sets the prices for each title at \$39.95 or less (some of these were already available near that price). The titles included in the program are *Mortal Kombat Trilogy*, *Doom 64*, *War Gods*, *NBA Hang Time*, and *Mace: The Dark Age*.

Quartermann

Video Game Gossip & Speculation

The build up to E' has already begun, and despite many of the software companies keeping slight-lipped about what will be on show, the Q-Man has been keeping his ear to the ground for all of the latest gossip and rumors. Back with an all-new format (but just as much juicy info), the Q is ready to roll once again...

LucasArts is rumored to have five games lined up to show at E'. Although nothing is confirmed yet, there are strong indications that one of them will be a new Tomb Raider-style Indiana Jones game. Right now the format is unknown, but an N64 version would make sense—especially since Sony's got Lara Croft sewn up exclusively for a while.

Speaking of Tomb Raider, the "real-life" Lara Croft Rhona Mitra is no longer playing the part, opting instead to pursue a movie/pinup career as a famous gorgeous person. The "new-and-improved" Lara is now played by French model Vanessa Demouy and has already been spotted in French magazines sporting a number of sexy outfits including a wet suit and even a bikini. Can anybody say "babe"? Rumor has it that Paramount have just picked up the movie rights too.

Shiny Entertainment has been experiencing a number of problems with their forthcoming Messiah...it seems that a number of more, shall we say, "loony" religious people have been writing in claiming that the word "messiah" is copyright of the Christian church. Elsewhere in the Shiny camp, the seemingly troubled Wild 9's is being thoroughly re-worked prior to any showing at E'. Industry tall person and Shiny President Dave Perry is now heading up the project personally in an effort to get the thing out on time.

Madden NFL 99 for the N64 will sport the NFL team license that Acclaim had exclusive rights to last year when it hits this fall. EA is well aware of the fact that a large part of QB Club's charm was its revolutionary high-resolution graphics, so they will be doing everything in their power to match—if it surpass—QB's amazing visuals.

In other piskin news, apparently both Sony and EA have been wowed by the success of Midway's NFL Blitz—so much so, in fact, that both of the game giants are releasing competing products. Sony's can be seen in this month's Preview section. We're awaiting news from EA.

The new Gauntlet arcade machine is being developed by Atari as we speak, and both PlayStation and N64 versions are rumored to be on the cards from Midway early next year. Very little information is available at present apart from the fact that the game is in 3D and will include two brand-new character classes.

Acclaim is rumored to be working on a 3D action game based on its comic book character Bloodshot. Details are sketchy, but use of the Turok 2 engine would obviously make a lot of sense.

Once Westwood has finished up with Red Alert: Retaliation for the PlayStation, the next game in the series is expected to be a 3D action/combat game tentatively titled Commando. Making use of the rich C&C background will no doubt make an absolutely incredible action game. Watch out for more news on this...We'll also be keeping an eye out for any news concerning Tiberian Sun hitting the consoles.

It is almost certain that Sega's new machine (code-named Katana) will only be shown behind closed doors at E' in May. No details on launch games are available at present although Sega has acknowledged the importance of high-caliber sports titles in the U.S., as well as acknowledging their high-profile franchises, such as Sonic, Daytona and V.F. Did somebody say "Sonic 3D"?

Square has confirmed that Final Fantasy VIII (that's 8 to all you non-Romans out there) will be out "before the end of the century." No details are available yet, although Square will be making announcements about this, their new PS game publishing deal and the U.S. fate of their "Zelda-basher" Brave Fencer Musashinden before the end of '98.

That's all for this month. His Q-ness will be packing his bags shortly and heading off to Tokyo to meet up with Terry Aki to storm the Spring TGS. Be sure to check back next month for all of the latest gossip from the land of the falling yen.

Tiger Scores With EA

EA Shows Woods the green for a new golf game

Electronic Arts recently announced they have secured a four-year agreement with Tiger Woods to develop, publish and distribute a golf game carrying his name for the PC and the PlayStation (an N64 title will follow in the future), as well as attach his name to future installments of EA's highly popular PGA Tour Golf series. A video game player since he was a kid, Woods will lend his golfing knowledge and skills to the design and development process of the new titles.

"I am thrilled to join the EA Sports team," said Woods. "I've played video games for many years. The chance to work with the top brand in sports gaming and play a key role in the design of an interactive golf product will be an exciting challenge."

The financial terms of the agreement were not disclosed, but analysts estimate the deal will net Woods \$5 to \$50 million, and could generate \$40 million worth of retail sales. Reportedly Electronic Arts won against bidders like Sony, Nintendo, and Microsoft.

"Signing Tiger Woods is a defining act for Electronic Arts and the PGA Tour Golf series," Richard Hilleman, Electronic Arts' vice president and executive producer said. "Tiger is the ultimate competitor who wins with strength, charisma and creativity. He is the embodiment of the EA Sports brand and the new world of golf."

www.easports.com



Sega Gets Animated

Two Sega characters come alive on the small screen

Two of Sega's characters will soon be coming to TV in brand-new animated series. The first is Sonic Underground, a new syndicated cartoon series which will follow Sonic the Hedgehog and his twin brother, Manic, and sister, Sonia, as they try to foil Dr. Robotnik's plans of world domination. Reprising his role as Sega's blue hedgehog with the "tude is Jaleel White, best known as Urkel from Family Matters.

It's expected that the format of Sonic Underground will remain similar to that of the previous Sonic series, with Robotnik and his goons up to their old tricks.

Maybe this new "Underground" series hints at the ushering in of a new era of Sonic games on Sega's next system. Let's hope so.

The second series stars Bug!, Sega's unlikely insect hero. Alliance Communications will produce the 13-episode, 30-minute show, which will star Bug, Kibosh, Kerfuffle and the Super Videots. According to Alliance, each episode will be divided into three short cartoons and described as "stand-alone character driven comedic" stories.

Alliance's other projects include ReBoot and Beast Wars Transformers. Mainframe Entertainment, the animation studio that produced both series will produce Bug! as well.

One can only guess that Sega might be working on a new Bug! title to go along with the series.

www.alliance.ca
www.sega.com



-The "Q"

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International News

インターナショナル ニュース

Virtual Pet in my PDA!

Sony's answer to Pokemon comes in the form of a pet PDA

Sony's February announcement of a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) to be introduced by the end of this year turned more than a few heads, mainly because it uses PlayStation memory cards as its format du jour. But don't begin celebrating just yet, this isn't a portable PlayStation. Instead, its main target is Nintendo's extremely popular Pocket Monsters series and Bandai's Tamagotchi line.

More Tamagotchi than PDA, the unit's tiny screen (32x32 dots) won't allow for varied gameplay, or even many of the features of a true PDA. The scenario is that developers could make a fighting game (or RPG, or any character-based game) where the player could train his fighter using both the PlayStation at home and the PDA when he's out and about. Gamers could then plug it back into the PlayStation and duke it out with a friend's fighter in color on the big screen.

Through the unit's infrared communi-

cation capability, players can exchange data with friends quickly and easily.

One interesting aspect of the machine is that software for it comes on a PlayStation disc. You then "download" it to a memory card to use on the PDA. The front flips up so that it can fit into the PlayStation memory card slot.

It's currently unknown whether the unit will be released in the U.S., but it will be available in Japan later this year, probably around the range of \$70-80.

www.sony.co.jp



Here are the current specs for the device:

CPU:	ARM7T (32-Bit RISC processor)
Memory:	SRAM - 2KB Flash RAM - 128KB (using the PlayStation memory card)
Graphics:	32x32 dot, monochrome LCD screen
Sound:	4-Bit PCM
Switch:	5 input buttons 1 reset button
Other:	Infrared communication: done by direction, aiming the unit at another unit LED Power display Built-in calendar ID Number Battery backup (for the calendar)



Tidbits...

Adding Color to Game Boy

Just as we were going to press, Japanese newspaper Asahi Shinbun reported that Nintendo has decided to release color version of the Game Boy. This time, "color" means not only its body but also the screen. This new Game Boy, tentatively called Color Game Boy (what else), will utilize the Super Mobile Liquid Crystal Display from Sharp Co. Ltd. It will be almost the same size as the current Game Boy Pocket, but will use two AA batteries, and thanks to Sharp's energy-saving LCD, battery life will be longer than that of the current Game Boy Pocket.

Nintendo is preparing several games including a Pokemon title which is compatible with the color LCD. Games will retail for the same price as current games. You can also play existing games with new Color Game Boy.

According to the report, Nintendo plans to release Color Game Boy around August for the Japanese and overseas markets simultaneously. As for the price, it's expected to be around 9,000 (about \$70, at current exchange rates) yen.

Punch Out Comes to Japan

Nintendo recently released Super Punch-Out! for the Super Famicom via the Nintendo Power system located in Lawson convenience store locations. If you want to buy the game, first you have to buy a Super Famicom Memory Cassette (3,900 yen), and then ask a shop clerk to write the game to your cassette (another 3,000 yen for new titles, 1,000 for older ones).

True Colors Shine Through

Sony releases Dual Shock pads and memory cards in rainbow colors

Sony recently announced it will release Dual Shock analog controllers in a variety of colors.

The first, the diamond-patterned black-and-white dual shock controller will be on sale on March 18. Sony will release crystal (clear), emerald, island blue and smoke gray-colored controllers beginning in April.

Sony also plans to release multicolored memory cards. There will be a total of eight color options for the cards: black, candy orange, cherry red, crystal, emerald, gray, island blue and lemon yellow.

These new memory cards will be available in retail shops in Japan beginning Feb. 26.

Sony's response to the future possibility of choice of colors when it comes to the PlayStation console is, "There's no such plan." At least there's always the black

Net Yaroze PlayStation. The Dual Shock analog pad should be available in the U.S. in early summer. Whether or not it will come in these new colors is still unknown.

www.sony.co.jp



Top 10 in Japan

The 10 Best-Selling Games As of Feb. 15

- 1 Xenogears (Square)-PS
- 2 Bio Hazard 2 (Capcom)-PS
- 3 Gran Turismo (Sony)-PS
- 4 Bust A Move Dance & Rhythm Action (Enix)-PS
- 5 SD Gundam G Century 5 (Bandai)-SS
- 6 Hyper Olympics in Nagano (Konami)-PS
- 7 Winter Heat (Sega)-SS
- 8 Bomberman World (Hudson)-PS
- 9 Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon (Square)-PS
- 10 Everybody's Golf (Sony)-PS

Sushi-X Files

compiled by: Shawn Smith

Something Exclusively For Our Loyal Subscribers!

The British Are Here

Some of you may have noticed an unfamiliar name in the Masthead last issue. John Davison, our new editor in chief, comes to us from the U.K., with lots of experience under his belt. Even with his credentials, we couldn't let him come on board unscathed. Hee hee hee...

INSIDE THE EGM OFFICES...



MEANWHILE AT THE DOCKS:



JOHNNY ENGLAND



SUDDENLY



THEN THEY ALL WENT BACK TO WORK AND HAD A GOOD TIME WITH THEIR TEA AND CRUMPTETS.

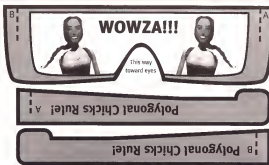
JILLY GARD IMPROVED.



...The End

I'M SEEING QUADRUPLES ...ER DOUBLES

If you can't get enough of Lara Croft, then this project is for you. You'll need the following supplies: scissors and Scotch tape. First cut out the shapes to the right, then cut slits in the dotted lines as shown (A and B) on both the arms and the frames. Now attach the arms to the frames through the slits. Tape them together and you're all set. Notice that you want the Lara images toward your eyes. That way you'll never have to live without her beautiful face and her naughty little smile that makes your heart sputter...it's sad really.



Note: There's a reason why these glasses aren't big enough.

As always, your suggestions are welcome and greatly appreciated. Lately, we haven't been getting as much mail from you as we would like. Remember that this section is especially for you, so if you have some cool ideas, send them in and we may just use them (with due credit of course). Anyway, send your thoughts to:

The Sushi-X Files
1920 Highland Ave. Ste. 222
Lombard, IL 60148

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US**

HOT & NOT @EGM

That's right! We thought you'd enjoy seeing what we've been getting knee-deep into, and other things we wouldn't touch with a 10-foot pole. The first column shows what's HOT and the second column is known as NOT.

- Aya from Parasite Eve
- Tekken 3 for the PlayStation
- Marvel vs. Capcom
- Upcoming Resident Evil figures
- Poseable action figures
- The plethora of awesome games inside Dave & Buster's
- South Park
- Omega Restaurant
- New Spawn toys
- NFL Blitz
- Monica Lewinski
- Social lives
- Cheap Saturn games
- The MST Intro on the latest PlayStation Underground disc (Vol. 2 Issue 3)
- Multicolored Yoshi Beanie Babies
- Alyssa Milano
- Sweet-tasting Milano cookies from Pepperidge Farm
- This list

- Ernest Evans (Genesis)
- Saddam Hussein
- The fact that it's so difficult to get a copy of GoldenEye for N64
- El Niño
- The White House scandal
- The plethora of annoying security guards inside Dave & Buster's
- "Novelty" X-Files episodes
- Birds in the local mall crapping on Crispin...new shirt for you?
- New X-Files action figures
- Lara Croft action figures
- T.G.I. Friday's
- The fact that the Saturn's best games emerge as the system dies...what a bummer...
- Sore wrists from...Winter Heat
- Tony Danza
- Sweaty-tasting Danza cookies from Pepperidge Farm
- Other lists

the trivia of GAMING

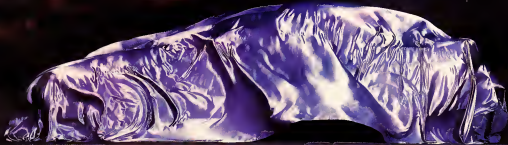
Hopefully some of these Q's will tickle your brain. Of course, this is our first attempt, so cut us a little slack! Hey, don't forget to give our kick-ass 900 number a call (1-900-PRE-VIEW) for more gaming trivia questions. You don't win anything for answering these questions, but if you call the line you might just win some cool stuff. Remember there's a per-minute charge when you call the line.

- 1) What game has two big bears as the first stage's Bosses?
 - a) GoldenEye 007 (N64)
 - b) Legendary Axe (TG 16)
 - c) Tomb Raider (PS)
 - d) Astal (Sat)
- 2) Mario's nationality is:
 - a) German
 - b) Japanese
 - c) Italian
 - d) Roman
 - e) None of the above
- 3) The BanjoKoot comes from:
 - a) Austria
 - b) South America
 - c) Africa
 - d) Australia
- 4) What delicious food item is Pac-Man modeled after?
 - a) Cole Slaw
 - b) Pizza
 - c) Orange
 - d) Lemon
 - e) All of the above

**NEXT
MONTH**

Don't be fooled...this is a "Next Month" for the Sushi-X Files only. The regular Next Month for the rest of the mag is near the back of the issue. Anyway, here's what to expect next time around: The Introduction of a running comic strip featuring hilarious commentary on the beloved video game industry—it'll be complete with speech bubbles even! Also watch for a special look at what movie stars, video game characters and/or household items we think various systems look like, and a list of the top 10 most wanted tricks of all time. All this and a few other surprises next month in Sushi-X Files. Note: Sushi-X Files is recommended by four out of five gamers as an ineffective way to relieve the symptoms related to the common cold. So much for that one...

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Nintendo 64

- 1080° Snowboarding
- Kobe Bryant's NBA Courtside

PREVIEWS

1080° Snowboarding

Realistic Boardin' N64 Style



The fact that so many people are going crazy over the extreme sport known as snowboarding these days probably goes hand in hand with the recent barrage of snowboarding games being released on nearly every game system. Some of them are just for fun, others capitalize on the trend by being flashy with no substance, while still others are a solid, more realistic product. 1080° Snowboarding from Nintendo is one of those solid snowboarding games, but also incorporates plenty of fun.

The elements of this N64 cart that make it so darned good are many. First, the fact that the game is developed by the same team that did Wave Race 64 (with Shigeru Miyamoto as producer) speaks for itself. Next you have the virtually flawless graphics, awesome sound effects and smooth control. Chris McGill from Nintendo puts it like this: "It's like real snowboarding without the snow down your pants." That's saying a lot, but at this point we have to agree.

1080° sports six modes of play: Match Race, Time Attack, Trick Attack, Contest, Two-player Vs. and Practice. The Match Race is the meat of the game where you compete against a series of computer opponents across three difficulty settings on a number of tracks. Next we have the Time Attack mode which lets you race against the clock, trying to make it down the track as fast as possible. Similar to this is the Trick Attack Mode where you not only have to make it through gates to increase your time limit, you also have to perform tricks for points. There's

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Nintendo of America	1-2	90	April 1998
Nintendo of America	Sports		

Web Address: www.nintendo.com



The game's graphics are simply stunning—complete with snow effects, lens flares, reflections and plenty more.

also a Contest Mode where you compete in five different "events" including three slalom courses, a half-pipe course and the Air Make jump (which is this HUGE ski-jump ramp). Then there's a Two-player Vs. Mode which is just that—two-player split-screen action. Lastly, there's the Practice Mode where you can learn how to do some mondo snowboarding tricks.



Trying to catch up to your opponent can leave you smashed against the side of a mountain with loads of damage.

My 2 Cents

It looks like we'll be reviewing this one next month, but I thought I'd give you a preview of what I think of the game. This one is by far my favorite snowboarding game on the market, across all systems. The only one that comes close is Steep Slope Sliders on the Saturn. Everything from the control (once you get the hang of it) to the graphics in 1080° is near perfect. The main things to watch for are the overly tricky AI opponents and the difficulty of understanding the control system.

—Shawn Smith



In the Match Race, there are three difficulties to complete: Normal, Hard and Expert. These aren't like difficulties that you can set though; these difficulties represent the kind of courses that lie ahead. The Normal difficulty mode includes Crystal Lake, Crystal Peak, Golden Forest and Mountain Village. Hard includes all of the courses in Normal and a new course, Dragon Cave. Finally, Expert Mode includes all of the courses in Hard and another new course, Deadly Fall. Even though you race the same courses in each of the later modes, the difficulty and time of day changes. In each mode, you get three boards which act as your lives.

The game has a total of 15 different courses to race on, although you don't race on all of them in one mode. Out of the 15, a total of nine of them are unique. These courses include: six downhill courses, a half pipe, the Air Make and a practice course to learn some moves. The practice course consists of both a half-pipe and a series of jumps. The two are connected so you can go back and forth between them.

All of the courses feature different kinds of snow to board on—well, actually some aren't snow at all. Certain courses will have you snowboarding on pavement, grass, ice and quite a few others. On top of this, look for nifty effects in each of the courses like falling snow, lens flares, tracks from your board, snow sprays when you hit a patch of powder and helicopters flying above as you go down the course.

Without characters to choose from, the game might get a little boring. That's why 1080° allows you to choose from five racers, each with his/her own nationality and attributes like Technique, Balance and Power, among others. On top of these five, there are three hidden characters to unlock. All of the characters' moves were motion-



Most objects in your path are welcome since you can launch off of them and catch some real air.



captured ensuring realistic movement when they're doing their authentic snowboarding moves. Some characters are better at certain moves than others due to their abilities. A constant with all of the racers is that they all have a damage meter. For example, when you smack against a rock wall or don't land right, your board sustains "damage." When it gets all the way down, that board is done—you lose one "life." If you don't finish a difficulty mode in three boards, then you have to start from the beginning. Choose your board wisely, too. Certain boards are better at downhill action than they are at stunts. There are eight authentic Lamar boards to choose from, some that are essentially the same board just at a different length. Like the players, each board has its own attributes, except each includes Acceleration, Control and Stability, among others. ●



Each course's time-of-day changes depending on what difficulty level you make it to.

EGM Factoid

1080° Snowboarding features both real Lamar Snowboards (www.lamarsnow.com) and authentic Tommy Hilfiger (no official Web site) snowboard clothing. So when you see your racer speeding down any of the courses in the game, know that they are using and wearing authentic snowboarding gear. What's that you ask? Yes, this info does help us sleep better at night.



LAMAR
SNOWBOARDS

Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

Nintendo
 Left Field 1-4 Sports 90 April
 1998

Web Address: www.nintendo.com

Kobe Bryant's NBA Courtside

Nintendo's First NBA Simulation

Nintendo isn't known for realistic sports games, but they've been somewhat forced into making them due to the need to plug some gaping holes in the N64's sports lineup. Even more surprising is that NBA Courtside, their first foray into basketball, is actually very simulation-minded. It isn't the arcade-style fare you might expect from Nintendo but perhaps that's because it is developers Left Field Productions who are responsible for what you see on screen. And, indeed, what is on screen is pretty impressive.

NBA Courtside was delivered to the EGM offices, and short of a few bugs, it is almost complete. The 3D graphics are as good as those found on basketball games on any system, though they don't seem to raise the bar in any way. The polygonal players are well-constructed, and move fluently around the court—there's very little jitter between the motion-captured moves. Better-known players have their faces texture-mapped, and there are varying player sizes that make them roughly the size of their real-life counterparts. And as you might expect, there are a variety of selectable camera angles, and even some that automatically flip to the view that best captures a particular dunk.

Courtside's gameplay seems to be well-balanced, and smart. In various playing sessions, the computer defended well and played good offense. There are a ton of moves to learn and are executed by presses of the C buttons. There are post passes, alley-oops, cross-over dribbles, calls for a pick and various dribble moves that can be used in conjunction with Turbo

speed (Z button). When you get the hang of them, you can really make your player scoot like a jitterbug as he flies to the hoop. For beefier, less nimble NBA players, there is the ability to post-up (by pressing R) and back in toward the bucket, something rarely offered or done correctly in basketball games. The one glaring omission in the version we tested was the ability to pass while jumping in the air. Such a move is crucial for faking shots, and is something that just about every basketball video game has.

While not as anally retentive as EA's NBA Live series, there is no shortage of features. Players can be created and extensively edited in appearance and abilities. There is full stat tracking during the season that includes individual stats, and those on overall team performance. Hardcore players will undoubtedly make use of those in addition to the playcalling on the fly. If you're not sure what a certain play does, just pause the game and read the play descriptions provided.

As you can see, NBA Courtside looks to be on track to become a great addition to the N64 sports lineup—especially for a first-time effort. At the very least, it will definitely top the horrendous NBA in the Zone 64 that is only (unfortunately) the only N64 hoops game currently available.





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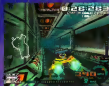



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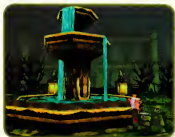
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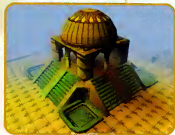
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DIG IN.

NINTENDO 64



The very first gameplay shots of *Castlevania 64* have surfaced from Konami. No new info has been released on the game itself, but as you can see from these shots—it looks HOT. More on this one next month.



Finally! The first pictures of *Turok 2* have arrived! Even though these shots are very obviously running off of a dev system, the game is looking sweet. Acclaim is adamant that the final version will be approaching this quality. Tune in next month when we blow out Acclaim's super sequel.

ON TARGET!

AeroFighters Assault
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- Nintendo Power -

"The missions are diverse and interesting, and the enemy AI is very nicely done."

- Electronic Gaming Monthly -

"You'd be hard pressed to find explosions, flames, and fighting aircrafts pretty as these."

- Ultra Game Players -

"It is rare that a console gets a title that stresses realistic flight control over arcade-style action, but this is exactly what AeroFighters Assault does."

- gamepen.com -

"...a very satisfying game playing experience that shouldn't be missed by any N64 owner that is even remotely interested in flight combat games."

- bird.taponline.com -

"AeroFighters' best qualities lie in its six realistic, highly maneuverable fighter jets (two are bonus jets)."

- NEXT GENERATION -

"This game is one of those ever-green titles that will hang around the system forever."

- Q64 -

AEROFIGHTERS ASSAULT



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Developed by Video Systems, Inc. The Official Sega Saturn Game for the U.S. Market.





You know, our new editor in chief comes from England, so we thought it would be just snazzy to add EA's forthcoming soccer game, *World Cup 98* to our fancy new preview gallery. Expect even better visuals and a refined gameplay engine.



Although the publisher hasn't been announced for *WCW Nitro*, we have these shots straight from Inland Productions, the game's developer.

For those keeping score, Konami's *Deadly Arts* was previously named *G.A.S.P.!!: Fighters' NEXTeam*. In our opinion, we're glad they changed the name, and we look forward to playing it when it arrives in May.



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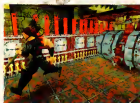
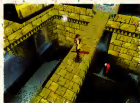
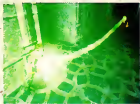
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PlayStation

PREVIEWS

X-Men vs. Street Fighter

Despite rehashes and rehashes of rehashes, Capcom 2D fighting games continue to thrive. Lately in the arcades, tag-team fighting seems to be Capcom's hook to keep players interested in an aging genre. The first game to feature tag teams is the immensely popular X-Men vs. Street Fighter. We've waited patiently for a home conversion, and finally it's here...almost.

Because of the PlayStation's poor sprite-handling powers and low RAM, X-Men vs. Street Fighter isn't exactly a picture-perfect arcade port. You can find little sacrifices (like missing animations) everywhere, but the biggest disappointment is the lack of the tag-team feature—the very feature that made the game so popular in the first place. Unfortunately, in this version, you can only fight as one member of your team (the other only shows up for special situations).

X-Men vs. Street Fighter is a flashy, double-digit-super-combos type of fighter. Its playing style is more akin to X-Men: Children of the Atom or Marvel Super Heroes rather than any Street Fighter game. Each of the 17 characters has a host of regular and special moves. You can build up your combo meter, however (by attacking and taking hits), and perform super combos. These supers are the screen-clearing, multiple-hit-dishing types you've



PlayStation vs. Saturn

Since we're almost definitely not going to see an American Saturn X-Men vs. Street Fighter, we're going to have to be content with a PlayStation version. Here's a brief summary of the PS version, and how it differs from the Japanese Saturn version (which benefits from a 4-Meg RAM cartridge, mind you).

No Tag Team: You can't switch between partners. Your teammate only comes in for team super combos and variable counters.

Speed (lack of): The PS version can only go up to turbo speed 4, while the Saturn version can go up to 8. Even on equal speed settings, the Saturn game is faster.

Combo Meters: The PS game lets you build up your combo meter almost twice as fast. For example, Saturn Ken takes 73 jabs to fill one level of the meter. The PS Ken only needs 37 jabs to get one level filled. This makes the PS version of the game a bigger super combo-fest than the game already is.

Healing: Since you can't switch out your fighter to let him rest and heal, the PS game lets you heal while you're fighting.

Icons: Icons now show how you won each round (including our favorite, the cheese).

Missing in Action: Capcom cut a lot of corners to make this game work on the PS. Missing are tons of frames of animation, including trivial standing animations, like Magneto's "trippy" hands.

New Modes: PS has exclusive Training and Survival Modes.

EX Combo: In this version, you can cancel out of supers early and link in new ones, as first seen in Street Fighter EX Plus c.

Game Directory

- X-Men vs. Street Fighter
- Mega Man Legends
- Warhammer II
- WarGames: Defcon 1
- Vigilante 8
- Pitfall 3D
- N2O: Nitrous Oxide
- Einhänder
- NFL Xtreme
- Akuji the Heartless
- Tomi Lost MC Racing
- Unholy War

Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

Capcom USA Inc. 1-2 75 May
Capcom Co. Ltd. Fighting 1998

Web Address: www.capcom.com



seen in other superhero fighting games. If you don't block the initial hit, you can usually expect to take a good deal of damage.

If you can build your power meter to Level 2 or higher, you can perform Tag Team Combos. Besides Variable Counters (this game's version of Alpha Counters from the SF Alpha series), this is the only time your partner will step into actual play—remember, in the PlayStation version, you cannot switch between characters. Tag Team Combos have your main character and your sidelined teammate performing their supers in unison. Ouch.

Capcom, realizing this version lacks in some areas, has made sure to include a few extras, like a Survival and a Training Mode. The coolest new feature is the EX combo system (named after the now-famous 3D Street Fighter game). You can now end super combos early and link them with another one for many extra hits.

Needless to say, X-Men vs. Street Fighter is a loud and action-packed fighting game full of flash and combo overkills (this game almost puts Killer Instinct to shame in those regards). If it's fitness you're looking for, look the other way. This game is all about brute and overwhelming force. And while it's missing the key ingredient that made the original so much fun to play, it has plenty to offer on its own. Fans eagerly awaiting this game shouldn't be terribly disappointed. ●



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PlayStation 2



THQ



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Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

Electronic Arts 1-2 85 April 1998
Electronic Arts Strategy

Web Address: www.ea.com

Warhammer II: Dark Omen



A Second Try At Warhammer

The two forces are separated by a ridge in the terrain; the only way for battle to commence is for your forces to find a way up the hill. Only then can the slaughter begin.

Strategy titles frequently suffer in the transition from the PC to the PlayStation, and with the possible exception of Westwood's Red Alert, it's safe to say that very few have made any kind of impact. What we have here is the follow-up to Mindscape's moderately successful PC and PlayStation strategy game, Shadow of the Horned Rat, a game which demonstrated this particular concept perfectly adequately.

As with its predecessor, Dark Omen uses the imagery and mythology provided by the associated Games Workshop Warhammer series of table-top wargames—however, this time the gameplay engine has been made much more "PlayStation friendly."

At bare-bones level, this is a real-time, skirmish-based strategy game that makes use of a "proper" 3D terrain that can be rotated and examined from different angles while the battle continues—much like Bullfrog's Syndicate Wars. However, unlike many other titles in the genre, Dark Omen presents you with an undulating battlefield complete with ridges, hills and valleys to provide strategic advantages to hanging out in certain areas.

"Console friendliness" has been implemented by limiting the confines of each battleground to relatively small areas. All missions within the campaigns have single goals, and invariably involve brief skirmishes that lead into one huge punch-up right at the end. Due to the fact there is no resource management throughout (apart from picking which units to send into battle), all that you have to worry about is moving your troops in a sensible fashion and annihilating anything that gives you a funny look.

As far as this story line goes, it's pretty much the kind of thing you'd expect. Demons, magic, big men with even bigger swords, undead soldiers...if you can think of pretty much any fighting-fantasy-style cliché...it's in here. The game casts you in the role of Commander Morgan Bernhardt, leader of the Grudgebringer (See what I mean? That's what his sword is called too.) mercenary army who has been hired to wipe out the increasing number of undead soldiers currently wreaking

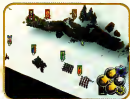


Dark Omen takes all of the good bits from predecessor Shadow of the Horned Rat and refines them into a better-looking and faster-paced strategy game.



havoc throughout the country. Your army begins the campaign with four regiments of troops: infantry, cavalry, crossbows and artillery, but as the campaign progresses you get the chance to hire new regiments and buy reinforcements. While you do this the story unfolds through campsite conversations with your allies which are all presented using a polygon-based animation system more in keeping with the style of the game as opposed to CGI stuff. Listen for some spectacularly over-acted accents in these sections.

Fans of Games Workshop will no doubt get a kick out of this game no matter what...the atmosphere it generates is pretty much spot-on. The version we looked at for this preview still needed some "tweaking" in the AI department, but on the whole it seems to be shaping up very nicely. ●



Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

MGM Interactive 1-2
Interactive Studios Action/Strategy 60 May
1998

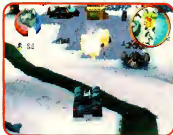
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www.gtgames.com

WarGames: Defcon 1

WarGames is the movie that brought hackers from a secret, dorky underground into the big-screen limelight. Although it has been awhile since the movie came out, a game based loosely on the idea behind the film could be pretty cool. That's where WarGames: Defcon 1 comes in, and according to Robb Alvey, producer for WarGames, you don't necessarily have to know about the movie to enjoy the game since it stands on its own.

WarGames on the PlayStation takes place 20 years after the movie. Now, David Lightman (Matthew



The moveable camera makes it easy to get the best view of your blatant destruction or your strategic placement.

flamethrower to a barrage of rockets. There are 15 units on each side, with a player being able to control up to eight of them during any given mission.

There are 30 missions in all—15 for each side—that take you around the world, in a variety of environments. Mission objectives are given before each mission via a simple, but slick interface.

What's unique about the game is that you can change the action/strategy balance. The action side of it is self-explanatory: Blow up anything that stands in your way, while still completing your objectives. On the strategy side though, things are more interesting. WarGames features a command style of play where you can control your units like a general. For example, if you send a jeep to an enemy base and lay down a marker, you can tell the rest of your units to go to that point automatically and blow up whatever enemy structures are nearby.

Although the one-player missions are a big part of the WarGames experience, the title also has a Two-player Split-screen Mode. This mode lets you play either cooperative or head-to-head missions. What's different than most games is that WarGames splits the screen diagonally, which according to Alvey works really well with the style of play.



The rather strange diagonally split two-player screen works surprisingly well.



Broderick's character in the film) is working for NORAD. To make a long story short, WOPR goes crazy again, a Web surfer unknowingly holds the fate of humanity in his hands and you're the one who has to fix everything.

This unique cross between Command & Conquer and a game from the Strike series puts you in control of either the WOPR mechanized forces or the NORAD military units. WOPR forces are like something out of the Terminator, with Hunter Killer-inspired crafts, mechs and other robotic-looking vehicles. The NORAD units are straightforward army vehicles. The vehicle's weapons range from a



The missions take you anywhere from along the South Pacific coast to Amsterdam.



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DUKE NUKEM

Game created by James Whitehead



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Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

Activision Luxoflux Corp. 1-2 Action 80 May 1996

Web Address: www.activision.com

Vigilante 8

Muscle Cars,
Machine Guns
and Funk

Last month, we gave you sneak peeks at this hot new game from the four-man team at Luxoflux. We finally got a chance to play it in-depth, and while the controls still need to be tweaked, we're pretty excited at what we've played so far. This '70s funkadelic take on the combat driving genre has what it takes to bump Twisted Metal 1 and 2 from the throne.

The vehicles are fairly interesting. They consist of classic muscle cars, pickup trucks and even a school bus, apparently a very popular vehicle with the focus/testing groups (in the words of an Activision associate producer, "Kid's love this [***** bus]").



Kids love this S**&!#@ school bus!

Quest Mode (where you follow a character's story line), a One-player Arcade Mode (where you can just jump in and fight against one to four other cars) and a Two-player Mode. Right now, the two-player game is only one-on-one, but that may change to become a free-for-all that may include up to four more cpu opponents (for a total of six cars in battle).



Each of the cars come with a standard machine gun. To pick up more powerful armaments (see sidebar), you must drive around the large levels and pick up weapon icons. If you can find the secret weapon crate, you can access that character's unique special power. Beezax, for example, can launch a swarm of mutant bees that can make short work of any car.

What really distinguishes this game from its competition, however, isn't the cars or the weapons; it's the awesome game engine. When you damage the front end, your hood can pop loose. When you get shot, you can see the bullet holes. If you get...ahem, rear-ended, your tail pipe and bumpers can be knocked loose. Windshields can shatter. You can start avalanches on the snowy mountains. You can almost feel the bumpy or slippery terrain underneath your wheels. In other words, this game engine is one of the finest we've seen in a while. It's extremely detailed and realistic—it really must be seen and played to be appreciated.

Vigilante 8 will include a One-player

The Armory

Most weapons have three functions. Besides their basic use, they have two special attacks (activated through joystick commands).

INTERCEPTOR MISSILES—An agile missile that uses optical and heat-seeking tracking.

Special #1: Halo Decoy—Fires a hot flare to throw off enemy tracking.

Special #2: Afterburner—Fires a missile without detaching it, resulting in a brief speed burst.

BULL'S-EYE ROCKETS—A powerful rocket with limited range and no tracking ability.

Special #1: Road Runner—Fires a non-explosive rocket, which sticks to enemies and pushes them out of control.

Special #2: Stampede—Fires remaining rockets in rapid succession.

BRUISER CANNON—A slow auto-tracking cannon on a turret.

Special #1: Cow Puncher—Fires a non-explosive force blast.

Special #2: Buckshot—Fires remaining shells in rapid succession.

ROADKILL MINES—Anti-vehicle mines.

Special #1: Bear Hug—A mine retrofitted with a gravitational force field that traps vehicles.

Special #2: Cactus Patch—Combines remaining mines into a proximity multi-mine that will scatter everywhere when vehicles approach it.

MORTAR SWIVEL—A fire-and-forget weapon. It fires an explosive charge that flies into the air and tracks its target.

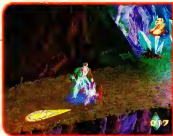
Activision 1 90 March 1998

Web Address: www.activision.com

Pitfall 3D

It's a frustrating fact of life in this industry: Games are often delayed, and you have to take most release dates with a grain of salt. So Pitfall 3D's year-late arrival to the PlayStation certainly isn't unprecedented—nor is it inexcusable. The game's development team went through some heavy personnel changes more than a year ago, forcing Pitfall 3D to miss its spring '97 release.

Now that it's nearly complete, however, Pitfall 3D looks ready to hit stores in March. And Activision claims the game has been heavily tweaked during its unexpectedly long development cycle. "We



Harry Jr. may have lost the whip he wielded in his *Mayan Adventure*, but now he has magic on his side.

While Activision intended all along to bring Harry Jr. to life with voice-overs, it was only recently that they lured Bruce Campbell, best known as the star of the *Evil Dead* series, to lend his voice to the role. But don't expect to hear any one-liners from the *Evil Dead* flicks in Pitfall 3D—despite the efforts of the developers, all of them fans of the schlock-horror series. "We'd thrown some things in the script that were obviously straight from the *Evil Dead* movies," Lafleur said, "and [Campbell] looked at us and said, 'Just for once I'm gonna get something that's not a reference to *Evil Dead*, you rat bastards!'"



Bosses are so big that puny Harry will need help—like when he hops aboard this fire-spitting dragon.

have a lot more art in the game than we originally planned," said Producer John Lafleur, "and we were able to fine-tune our Boss engines so they offer a bit of variety to the gameplay."

The basics of the game haven't changed. As Pitfall Harry Jr., you must battle through the otherworldly realm of Djinn and seal its entrance to Earth, thus saving humanity from godlike bad-boy Scourge. The 11 3D levels (and three Boss stages) sprawl through jungles, volcanic and acid-filled regions, Aztec temples and prison camps, and each area has several branching paths. You get specific missions, too, such as destroying scattered mine extractors or rescuing the beautiful female leader of the Djinn resistance. Like the original Atari cart, the game has you swinging on vines and leaping over bottomless pits—except this time instant-death chases are everywhere, making Pitfall 3D one of the most difficult platform games.



Pitfall 101

For you newbies to Pitfall lore, here's a recap of Harry's exploits:



Pitfall 1982, Multiplatform
Developed by Activision co-founder David Crane, it was the Super Mario Bros. of its day.

Pitfall II: Lost Caverns 1984, Multiplatform

Crane's sequel was bigger and better than the original, as well as one of the very first platform games.



Super Pitfall II 1987, NES
Aside from its name, this so-so side-scroller had little to do with the other games in the series.



Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure 1995, Multiplatform
Introduced Harry Jr., whose reunion with dad is the finale made for one of gaming's funniest endings.



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More fun than shooting your neighbor's cat.



Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

Fox Interactive Gremlin Interactive 1-2 Shooter 80 June 1998

Web Address: www.foxinteractive.com

N2O: Nitrous Oxide

Ever miss the old arcade shooters where you do nothing but blaze through level after level, shooting every enemy in sight, vying for nothing more than the high score? Well, Gremlin has created a 3D shooter that has today's graphics with yesterday's traditional arcade action.

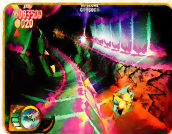
This action all takes place inside tunnels inhabited with more than 22 species of alien bugs. Each type of enemy has its own special formations and attacks, like scorpions who lay mines on the tunnel walls and black widows who explode into swarms of baby spiders when shot. Even the once-peaceful butterfly becomes certain death from above.



You'll have a variety of weapons (more than 14) to take these bugs out, but choosing how you kill them can make for higher scores. For example, you should shoot centipedes in the head instead of the main body (sound familiar old-time gamers?). After you kill off an enemy, a coin will appear, which you can shoot up to four times to increase its value. Collect these coins and at the end of each level, you can buy shields, firewalls (an exterminating, tunnel-clearing ring of fire) and even more points.

The entire feel of N2O fits well with the 3D shooter genre. This is a very fast-moving game (60 frames per second) with very impressive, if not overly done, graphics. The crazy lighting effects, warping and morphing tunnels, and wild explosions provide such sensory overload, that ravers might feel right at home with this game. The soundtrack (to be done by a yet undisclosed techno band) will only add to the psychedelic madness. (On a side note, we asked the programmers if they did a lot of LSD while programming. They thought we were joking...)

At heart, N2O's gameplay may remind many players of the famous shooter, Tempest. This isn't totally by accident. "We set out to create a game where the gameplay was simple on one level but completely absorbing and addictive on another," says Peter Dalton, Gremlin's producer on N2O. "The sort of thing that leaves the player saying, 'Just one more go' like the old arcade classics, such as Tempest." With emphasis on earning high scores and beating endless waves of oncoming enemies, N2O might have captured the formula that made Tempest such a success. ●



Behind the Screens

This Beat Is Techno

Fox Interactive is looking to sign a high-profile techno band to create the perfect mood music for N2O to draw in the rave generation of video gamers. Chances are, the name of the game will change slightly to accommodate this potentially hot group (N2O: Nitrous Oxide, featuring...?). Our votes? How about Chemical Brothers, Prodigy or Moby?



POINT BLANK

by

namco

get trigger happy

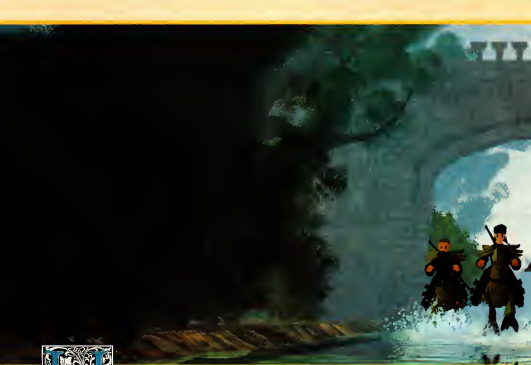
Bang! Meow! Bang! Meow! Come on already. It's time you moved up the food chain and take aim at something that sounds better when it explodes. And you can when you grab your gun, included free with Point Blank, the newest arcade shooting sensation from Namco that'll have you firing till your fingers fall off. Get trigger happy at your next party with over 70 loony shooting scenarios as everything from piranhas and vultures to chickens and octopi fall to the wayside. Look, the directions are easy: if it's bigger than a pixel, shoot it.

Great Party Game! Up to Eight Players!



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TRAINING AN ARMY

{ or how to ensure the biggest, baddest, meanest SOB's are on your side }



In Final Fantasy Tactics, you are Ramza, a young squad leader and an ally of Princess Ovelia. It's up to you to lead an elite fighting squad of your own choosing into battle. You must train them to be powerful Black Mages who can cast magic spells, Summoners who can awaken terrible beasts, Wizards,




Ninjas, Bards, Archers, Thieves and more. There are nineteen fighting classes and four hundred abilities to master. If you go into battle ill-prepared, may the enemy make the blood run cold from your heart. 

EFFECTIVE BATTLE STRATEGIES

{or further discussions from the annals of shoot first, ask questions later}



As the ancient history of warfare reveals, you will survive if your battle strategy is strong, and perish if it is not. You will lead the charge through impressive lands trying to gain the best strategic positions in forests, castle ramparts, swamps and valleys. You can buy and sell equipment, hire new soldiers and plan glorious battle strategies. May you conquer the enemy or may you die trying. 



SQUARESOFT

**FINAL FANTASY TACTICS**

Publisher/Developer: Players/Gears % Done: Release

Sony Computer Ent. 1 75 May
 SquareSoft Shooter 1998

Web Address: www.playstation.com

Einhänder

Square's First
 Shooter Is
 Nearly At
 Hand

Although it is superbly packaged in brilliant 3D graphics, *Einhänder* really plays like a traditional side-scrolling shooter. Well, traditional only in the sense that you move back and forth and shoot things on a single plane of existence. You see, Square's new shooter takes the gameplay of classic 2D shooters, and attempts to juice it up in every way possible.

You control a ship that comes equipped with a nose-mounted gun and, strangely enough, a grappling arm. By the press of a button, this extendible arm can be used to reach out and take your enemies' weapons away from them for use on your own ship. Sound ironic? Perhaps. Deadly? Definitely. There is a wide variety



We told you there was carnage. Just look right here, you can see we weren't lying!

of weapons that can be picked up, and right when you think you've seen them all, a new one pops up that you haven't seen before. Grenades, Light Sabers, Spread guns, huge Cannons and Vulcan guns are just part of the arsenal that can be pillaged and used within the game. Even better, the weapons serve different functions, depending on how they are mounted on your ship. For example, if the rapid-fire Vulcan gun is mounted on the bottom of your ship, it will only fire a stream of bullets forward. If it is switched to the top, it becomes an auto-aiming, rapid-fire weapon. Adding even more depth to the gameplay are different ships that you can choose. Each ship has a special way of handling these weapons. Some ships can mount two at a time but can't carry extra ones, while others can only fire one at a time, but can store acquired weapons for use later (selectable via the shoulder buttons). Suffice to say, it's a great crash-course in weapon management.

Like all shooters, the action in *Einhänder* becomes quite frantic. But this game might take it to all-new

Great shooters are very rare these days, and after playing this nearly complete version of *Einhänder*, we think there's a good chance that Square's shooter will break this dry spell.



Did we mention cool Bosses? Yes, I think we did. Check out this fire-saw throwing tank-thing.



Publisher/Developer	Players/Teams	% Done	Release
Sony Computer Ent. Sony Interactive	1-4 Sports	50	3rd Qtr. 1998

Web Address: www.playstation.com

NFL Xtreme

With Midway's NFL Blitz creating such a big stir at arcades across the land, it was only a matter of time before other game companies discovered the excitement of "extreme" football. And while the premise of wild, exaggerated sports is not new to video games (see NBA Jam), ironically it is new to the football genre.

The premise of NFL Xtreme is a five-on-five match-up in which every player is an eligible receiver. To further promote the "anything goes" mentality there are no boundaries or penalties (save delay of game) and a first down is 20 yards. Just imagine a simplified GameDay 98 with mean, superman-like players hitting each other so hard helmets frequently launch off heads like wayward cannon balls. Along those lines, look for flip, spear and clothesline tackling not to mention the entire library of GameDay moves including the stiff arm, juke, spin, etc.

Because of the small amount of players on field, the developers were able to use 400 polygonal player models. They claim four times the number of GameDay 98. What does this



With only five players to a side, the game is able to clip along at more than 30 frames per second.

mean? Expect some highly detailed players with unusually large biceps and thighs. Other interesting visual effects—torn jerseys, limping players, 50 different celebration dances and playing in a blizzard? All these elements sound swell but we're looking forward to the highly satisfying "late hit on the celebrating player" the most. There's nothing like it...it just feels so right.

As far as options go, NFL Xtreme will mirror GameDay offering create-a-player, draft picks, season play, etc. Most importantly, real NFL teams and schedules will be used as well as the same groundbreaking game engine.

With any luck, NFL Xtreme could turn out to be a very good game. Of course, with the home version of NFL Blitz on the horizon Sony better hurry up and get it out.



It's OK to crush a player's knees in this GameDay 98 knockoff.



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Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Crystal Dynamics Crystal Dynamics	1 Action	20	September 1998
Web Address: www.crystall.com			

Akuji the Heartless

Take a
Gecko, and
add a little
voodoo...

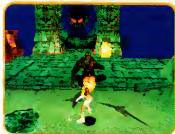


It would seem that the "3D free-roaming action game" is the next genre of choice for the majority of developers. Still inspired by the success of Mario on the N64, the search for something of equal caliber continues on the PlayStation. After last year's slew of "almost, but not quite" titles, it would appear that we're finally going to see not only games with comparable technology, but also some interesting skewers on actual game content.

Crystal Dynamics has a powerful game-creating tool in the shape of the engine used for *Gecko: Enter the Gecko*, and throughout the course of 1998 and beyond we should see this (and further incarnations) put to effective use. The first off the blocks is this—a game that is a bold step away from the wise-cracking, movie-parodying



All of the action is viewed from a camera above and behind Akuji, however the camera system is intelligent and will move to allow you the best view of the scene.



effectively—and while the gameplay mechanics are what you'd expect from a 3D action game (run, jump, shoot and lash out with nasty fist-mounted blades) the integration of realistic contextual AI where the bad guys seemingly "respond" to different things you do makes the whole environment more believable. Gone are the days where the bad guys just zero in on you regardless...here we encounter a more pensive and seemingly "intelligent" assailant. Having had the chance to play an early version, it was impressive to see creatures backing off and quite obviously being "aware" of the player's presence.

Add to all of this behavioral science some gorgeous lighting and polygonal morphing effects, and you have a PlayStation game that is most certainly a step up technologically from similar titles in the past.



antics previously favored. Fueled by voodoo imagery and dark, macabre violence, *Akuji* is a 3D action game where the emphasis is definitely on the nastier side of things.

Playing the role of *Akuji*, the story begins as you are murdered by your evil brother, a powerful voodoo priest, in order for him to steal away your bride. However, *Akuji* isn't just murdered—he has his heart ripped out (...the Heartless, get it?) and is then banished to hell. There—told you it was dark and nasty.

As you'd expect then, the majority of the game concerns *Akuji*'s quest to avenge his death and escape from hell. To do this he has to explore the 3D environs of hell and locate the spirits of his ancestors while he accumulates voodoo powers in order to escape and return to the material world.

The game employs the enhanced *Gecko* graphics and gameplay engine extremely



Voodoo magic allows you to employ magical-ranged attacks such as this fireball.



Publisher/Developer Players/Gears % Done Release

Fox Interactive
Gremlin Interactive 1-2 Racing 80 May 1998

Web Address: www.foxinteractive.com

Team Losi RC Racing

It's no secret that RC racing games are generally a hit with gamers. Who can forget the fun of RC Pro Am from the olden days of the NES? It would only make sense that a new addition to the genre would be on its way. Enter: Team Losi RC Racing from Fox Interactive.

This nice-looking racer with fancy 3D lighting effects drops you in the front seat of one of 16 different remote-controlled vehicles. What makes these cars more than just some polygons is the game's design team whipped together is the fact that Gremlin is working with leading race team and car manufacturer Team Losi to give the cars in the game the look, feel and response of actual RC cars. The development team has been spending time at RC



Although RC Racing may have a seemingly cartoon style on the surface, it's a fun, fast-paced racer at its core.

tracks with Team Losi so they have a better understanding of how RC cars respond to steering input, acceleration, etc. On top of this, the cars in the game will be colored and decorated to represent real Team Losi models, with the fastest car in the game being modeled after the World Champion. Of course, a cool license is only part of what makes a game good.

The four modes of play are straightforward, giving you what you might expect from a racing title. The one-player courses offer plenty of play in themselves with shortcuts and other secrets, and there's a Two-player Head-to-head Mode for added replay—a must-have mode for any racing game. The other two modes are a Championship and Time Attack. The game's normal-sounding (but surreal-looking) environments include a Diddy Kong-inspired beachside course, a mountain pass and a scorching desert, among many others. Overall, there are 16 different courses to race on.

Each of the levels have colored gates you must pass through to receive power-ups. Let's say you pass through a red gate. An icon on the screen tells you the next gate in the sequence is yellow, and then green and so on. Once a certain number of gates are passed through, a power-up is yours. If you miss on of the gates though, you'll have to start fresh with no power-up.

For added realism, each of the game's cars has its own physics, which Team Losi has helped with. But since the courses you ride around on aren't like your average everyday RC tracks, the physics are a bit more relaxed. The cars can easily bounce and flip over if they hit a ramp a certain way. ●

The themed environments will have you going all over the place, jockeying for first.



Passing through the colored gates in various sequences will land you different power-ups.



Each of the 16 Team Losi-inspired RC cars has its own attributes to best suit your favorite style.



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Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

Crystal Dynamics 1-2 40 4th Qtr. 1998
 Crystal Dynamics Strategy

Web Address: www.crystalld.com

Unholy War

Star Control
 meets Final
 Fantasy Tactics

Those of you with a penchant for quality games will no doubt respect the pedigree for this one. The team behind it has previously worked on such classics as Archon (remember that?), Star Control and The Horde and throughout their history they have had an uncanny knack for blending cerebral strategy gaming with more mass-market "action" appeal.

Unholy War is no different—and like the team's previous efforts it allows you to play in a variety of different ways—as a "story" game which is a long campaign, as a combat game, or as a two-player "melee" combat-fest that completely ignores the strategy side of things and just lets you jump straight in and kick ass.



The 3D "Action" Mode sees two opposing units battling it out within a detailed environment.

Taking control of either side, the game is played on two levels—the strategic, which is a 3D turn and hex-based strategy game (not as bad as it sounds... promise) and then the action. When two opposing factions meet, the game changes into a 3D action battle set within a small arena. This is where the Star Control analogues come in, as the mechanics of play are very similar to the battles in this timeless classic where you pick your individual combatant and then control him in a fight to the death.

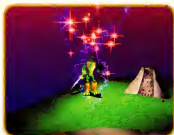
The game is filled with some beautiful effects, most notably some of the magic effects instigated by the Xsarans—but what's most important is that the gameplay draws on some proven ideas that have been updated to fit in with the current wave of Japanese action/strategy titles. ●



As with the current crop of Japanese action/strategy games there are some stunning magical effects employed throughout.

Set on an alien world the game provides an effective mix of fantasy style magic, sorcery and swordplay with high-tech machinery, spaceships and the all-important laser guns. Think Final Fantasy Tactics and Vandal Hearts mixed with Star Control and Return Fire and you're half way to understanding what this is like.

The background to the game deals with an (un)holy war between the inhabitants of Xsarra (alien fantasy names never have enough vowels in them)—the swords 'n' magic people, and the invading Yelkans—the spaceships and laser guns people. There's a long and complicated story leading up to the actions of the game—but the upshot of it all is that there's now a big punch-up just waiting to happen. Much like the trend in recent Japanese strategy RPGs, the story unfolds through animated set-pieces that make use of the games' polygonal engine. So good is the presentation of the game itself that it has been possible for the development team to seamlessly integrate story elements without having to render lengthy CG animations.





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"4 1/2 out of 5"

— PSM Magazine

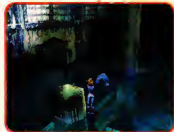


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PLAYSTATION



Crystal Dynamics' *Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver* is a wonderful example of just how far the PlayStation can be pushed graphically. Using a dramatic reworking of the Gex engine, it features Tomb Raider-like gameplay and stunning character design.



Romance of the Three Kingdoms V from Koei will put you into the shoes of an emperor from feudal China. One thing in this version that wasn't supported in old-school NES versions is an Eight-player Mode. Expect it in the third quarter 1998.



Stunt RC Copter from Shiny allows you take control of a little RC chopper and fly it around PilotWings-inspired settings. Designed as an interactive toy, the game uses the dual-analog like a real copter. No publisher has been announced.



PLAYSTATION

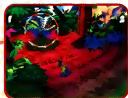


All we know on this strangely named game known as *Soldnerschild* is that it's an RPG/simulation reminiscent of *Dragon Force* on the Saturn. Coming out later this year, this Koal title has a huge cast of characters and spacious worlds.

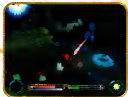


Tekken 3 Producer Hajime Inakami told us last month the game would pack never-before-seen extras. Talk about an understatement. Turns out *Tekken 3* features a 3D side-scrolling mini-game reminiscent of *Final Fight*. Called *Tekken Force Mode*, it's four levels that pit you against enemy soldiers, as well as regular game characters. Each round ends with a Boss stage, and you get a special ending when you beat the final Boss.

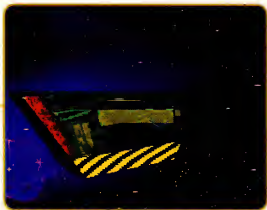
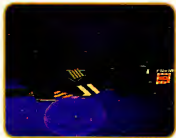
Imagine *Psygnosis' Psybadek* as a *Crash Bandicoot*-type 3D platformer played on a hoverboard. In the game, you speed through fairly linear levels, performing tricks to pass obstacles and kill enemies.



O.D.T. (Or Die Trying) is a futuristic 3D action-adventure game by *Psygnosis*. You can select one of four characters, each with his or her own special abilities. You can also cast spells from four different realms. Expect awesome lighting effects and smooth animations.



PLAYSTATION



Colony Wars: Codename Vendetta is the follow-up to the critically acclaimed 3D space shooter. Psygnosis promises this sequel is not just a quick cash-in on a proven hit. They are improving the game and graphical engines enough to make this a fresh playing experience.

From the makers of *Tiger Shark* comes **Duke Nukem: Time to Kill**. n-Space takes Duke where no Duke has gone before—into a fully polygonal 3-D world. Due out sometime in October, this *Tomb Raider*-esque blast-a-thon features a third-person view but we're assured will keep the Duke Nukem feel. Be sure to check out our exclusive Duke Nukem: A Time to Kill Designer Diaries at our online site, www.videogames.com.



Bio F.R.E.A.K.S. from Midway is a 3D fighter that doesn't pretend to be anything else. The game has patented Midway gore with plenty of body parts, buckets of blood and loads of fatalities, plus a strange bio-mechanical cast.

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GAUNTLET

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I

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ArCADE

PREVIEWS

Game Directory

• Ehrgeiz

Ehrgeiz

Tobal and Bushido Blade gone arcade

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genres	% Done	Release
Name: Squaresoft	1-2 Fighting	90	1st Qtr. 1998
Web Address: www.sanco.com			

The first Squaresoft arcade game is making its way to arcades soon. Ehrgeiz is a fighting game in the style of the Tobal series on the PlayStation. For the arcade, it is the only game of its type: a true 3D engine (no, War Gods does not count). This engine allows your character to have full 360-degree range of motion and adds new depth to a somewhat tired genre. In Ehrgeiz, you must make sure you're directly facing the opponent, or you won't hit them (unlike say SFII or Tekken, where you're automatically facing your enemy). It seems as if it will be difficult to learn this new type of combat.

Ehrgeiz has a total of 32 characters, including Cloud and Tifa from Final Fantasy VII and two lion-esque Bosses. Cloud and Tifa are time-release characters and will be available roughly a month after initial launch, the Bosses will come after that. One possible problem with Ehrgeiz is that the characters seem to be the same. There is one grappler-type character, but other than that, all of the fighters' basic moves use the same joystick motions. This is the same for Cloud and Tifa, who sadly appear to utilize nothing (Limit Breaks, Materia usage, etc.) from FFVII. The button layout is pretty much the same as Soul Edge: Guard, High Attack, Low Attack, Special. The Special button is a weapon-based attack which is different for each character (i.e., Godhand plants mines, Inooba has grappling attacks, etc.). There are also plenty of basic mechanics to learn such as reversals, rolling while on the ground, utilizing boxes and other objects found on the stage, and much more.

The graphics and animation are



awesome. The characters are rendered beautifully and have that Tekken/VF feel. The backgrounds are excellent as well. Most are enclosed spaces such as a wrestling ring or a train car. A couple of stages even have multiple heights (in the stands of a Roman coliseum). Ehrgeiz can be summed up in one word: innovative, something needed in today's fighting games.



Star
Gladiator
2

Street
Fighter EX 2



Racing
Jam

Sega
Rally 2



The characters for EX 2 have been announced, and Vega joins the crew. An SFA2-esque custom combo has been added as well. Gladiator 2 will be previewed when we have more info on it. Konami's Jam will hopefully appear at ASI in Vegas this March, along with the incredible Sega Rally 2.

EGM
70

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May 1998

Coming soon

Compiled by: John Stockhausen

PLAYSTATION

Clickbinder	Sony Computer Entertainment	May	Shooter
Demmental Gear Bolt	Working Designs	May	Shooter
World Cup '98	EA	May	Sports
Forza	Acclaim	May	Action
Master of Monsters	Acclaim	May	Action
Mega Man Legends	Capcom	May	Action
Reining Wild	Universal Studios	May	Racing
Team USA '98 Racing	Fox Interactive	May	Racing
Tekken 3	Namco	May	Fighting
Vigilante 2	Activision	May	Action
World Games	WGT Interactive	May	Action
X-Men vs. Street Fighter	Capcom	May	Fighting
Adult Dreams	Bandai	June	RPG
Blas Masters Classic: PC	THQ	June	Sports
Cardinal S/M	Sony Computer Entertainment	June	Fighting
Cross Miller	Interplay	June	Action
Crash Twinsanity	Sony Computer Entertainment	June	Racing
Gran Turismo	THQ	June	RPG
Granstream Saga	Acclaim	June	Sports
Hardball 6	Interplay	June	Act/Adv
Heart of Darkness	Sony Computer Entertainment	June	Sports
Hot Shots Golf	EA	June	Sports
MLB	EA Interactive	June	Fighting
NJD	Moby	June	Shooter
Off Road Challenge	Acclaim	June	Racing
Constructor	Acclaim	July	Simulation
Recline Racing	Acclaim	July	Racing
Silhouette Mirage	Working Designs	July	Action
WWF WrestleMania	Acclaim	July	Sports



The arcade smash X-Men Vs. Street Fighter is being ported over to the PlayStation with some major changes. See what they are in the preview of the game in this month's PlayStation Preview section, pg. 42.

One of the most anticipated baseball games of the season is MLB Featuring Ken Griffey Jr. for the Nintendo 64. Yes, it's been a long wait but the game's almost here.



SATURN

Burning Rangers	Sega	May	Action
Magic Knight Rayearth	Working Designs	May	RPG
Shining Force II	Sega	May	RPG



Mega Man Legends puts you in control of the blue hero, except this time he's in a true 3D environment. The game has action, adventure and even some RPG elements. Check out the preview on pg. 44.

Want to own one of the best-looking PlayStation games to date? Then get ready for Forsaken from Acclaim Studios. This Descent-style shoot-'em-up is also on its way to the N64. Both versions are due out in May.



NINTENDO 64

All-Star Baseball '99	Acclaim	May	Sports
Bust-A-Move	Acclaim	May	Puzzle
Deadly Arts	Konami	May	Fighting
World Cup '98	EA	May	Sports
Forza	Acclaim	May	Action
Jeggy's Recliner Balls	Acclaim	May	Racing
Wile Plazzo's StrikeZone	GT Interactive	May	Sports
MLB Featuring Ken Griffey Jr.	Nintendo	May	Sports
Quest 64	THQ	May	RPG
Cruin's World	Nintendo	June	Racing
Flying Dragon	Natsune	June	Fighting
Mission: Impossible	Ocean	June	Act/Adventure
Mortal Kombat 4	Midway	June	Fighting
Wetrix	Ocean	June	Puzzle
Smile-Kazeole	Nintendo	July	Action
Superman 64	Titus	July	Action
Toxic Trouble	Ubi Soft	July	Action
World Grand Prix	Video Systems	July	Racing
WWF WrestleMania	Acclaim	July	Sports

GAME BOY

Legend of the Raver King	Nintendo	May	RPG
Harvest Moon	Nintendo	June	RPG
Dino's Museum	THQ	July	Action
Montezuma's Revenge	Take 2	July	Action

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The image shows the cover art for the video game 'Zelda 64'. It features a landscape with a blue sky, a green field, and a large, glowing blue sword in the foreground. The text 'ZELDA 64' is written in a stylized, yellow font with a starburst effect.

the RPG revolution

With *Zelda 64* and *Parasite Eve* leading the pack of more than 12 innovative role-playing games, 1998 is looking to be *the year of the RPG*

So when's the last time you've been to Hyrule? Link and Princess Zelda's old stomping grounds aren't the 2D, top-down, sprite-filled fantasy land they used to be. And neither are the worlds, combat systems and plot lines of this year's bumper crop of role-playing titles. In fact, 1998 is looking to be the biggest year for console RPGs that U.S. gamers have ever seen. It's almost as if Link-like pointy-eared Paul Revere—is bucking his horse at full gallop and yelling, "The RPGs are coming! The RPGs are coming!" with an RPG revolution hot on his horseshoes.

More than a dozen role-playing games are expected to hit stores this year for the three main consoles (and that's not including the already released *Alundra* and *Final Fantasy Tactics*). Compare that to the six titles that came out for the PlayStation and Saturn in 1997. N64 owners are finally getting their RPG fix this year, too, with *Quest 64*, possibly *Earthbound 64* and—of course—*Zelda 64*, due out by Christmas. Any way you look at it, RPGs are finally booming in the U.S., leaving the genre's legions of fans to wonder what the heck took so long. After all, the games have always had street credit aplenty. Why are they getting so much credit from so many publishers now?

"The easy answer is *Final Fantasy VII*, but that's not entirely the whole story," said Working Designs President Victor Ireland, who has strived for years to make RPGs more popular in the U.S. "I say it had a lot to do with an underground of RPG fans that was getting bigger and bigger all along but was never addressed by the marketing people, because they thought RPGs were a niche. And as long as they thought of them as a niche, they remained a niche."

Ireland, the most outspoken expert on RPGs in the U.S., explained that console role-playing games have always been good enough and enjoyed enough of an avid following to go mainstream. It just took the overwhelming success—and advertising muscle—of a few key titles to hammer that message home to the marketing types. "Super Mario RPG on the Super NES and *Final Fantasy VII* were the two most responsible for bringing it out," he said. "One was a good game, and the other was a good-looking game, and they both had lots of ad and marketing money behind them."

Now that *FFVII* has achieved its much-publicized million-seller status, publishers suddenly see RPGs as one niche they're eager to scratch. But then, can role-playing games even be considered a niche genre anymore? A Ziff-Davis survey conducted last year found that RPGs were gamers' second-favorite genre, beaten only by action/adventure titles (with one-time reigning champ fighting games tying for third place with sports). And not only are RPGs gaining in mainstream popularity, they're also drawing a new generation of fans. "I think there's always been a strong RPG group of players out there," said Paul Handelman, U.S. liaison officer for Enix, the Japanese RPG giant behind the phenomenally popular *Dragon Quest* series. "But what's happened recently is there's a new, younger group of people who have gotten into these games. RPGs are attracting a much wider age group."

This new army of role-playing fanatics is just in time not only for the biggest batch of games to hit stateside in years, but also some of the most innovative. Look at the new types of battle systems, for instance. As the tired idea of random, turn-based battles edges closer to extinction, we're seeing

Continued on the bottom of the next page.



Parasite Eve

Square, 3rd Qtr.



AYA『この薬... まさか...?』

Of all the games covered in this feature, none will come under as much scrutiny as the next high-profile RPG from the people who brought us Final Fantasy VII. After all, it's rare for something to affect the tastes of the game-playing public on quite the scale that FFVII managed last year—but Square pulled it off and at the same time brought RPGs into the mass market.

Yet Square's next big thing, Parasite Eve, is actually a very different game from its predecessor; the traditional swords-'n'-sorcery themes have been entirely eschewed in favor of something with more of a science-fiction flavor. To say that it has a lot in common with Japanese sci-fi anime such as Akira or even (in places) some of the *Uratsukidoji*: Legend of the Overfiend stories wouldn't be too far from the truth.

PE makes use of a modified version of the FFVII game engine so, once again, we find beautifully rendered backgrounds overlaid with polygon-generated characters. Set in New York, the game is based on a novel by acclaimed Japanese sci-fi author Hideaki Sena that was

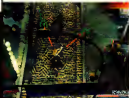
published 18 months ago in Japan. Centered on the experiences of Aya Brea, a rookie NYPD cop, it deals with her investigations into the spread of a freak of nature that is gradually laying siege to the city.

The game begins on Christmas Eve and sees Aya and her boyfriend at an opera that's thrown into turmoil as the actors on stage spontaneously combust. Amidst the confusion, the apparent perpetrator (the eponymous Eve) reveals herself as she announces the ascension of a new order, that of the Mitochondria.

Upon further investigation, Aya discovers that Mitochondria is the organic matter contained within all living cells responsible for producing energy. It soon becomes apparent that Eve's Mitochondria has mutated to the point of sentience, and through her it's attempting to annihilate all inferior life-forms. As this parasitic energy absorbs life energy, it transforms Eve into a superbeing that can switch between solid and liquid form, while also destroying living matter simply by looking at it.

Once absorbed by the mutated Mitochondria, a living being is broken down completely into a slimy goo before being rebuilt as a more

Parasite Eve's battles will make use of the innovative new "Active Combat System." Unlike FFVII, you can move around freely during combat.



Aya will change her appearance throughout the game. She starts off in this slinky dress when she leaves the opera at Carnegie Hall.



The CG rendered backgrounds are generated by a team headed up by former movie artists who have worked on *Apollo 13* and *True Lies*.

Must-play RPGs

In case you missed out on the past decade of RPGs, here are the standout games, from the first breakthrough classics to the most recent masterpieces.

● The Legend of Zelda NES, 1987

● Zelda II: The Adventure of Link NES, 1988

● Fantasy Star Master System, 1988

a huge assortment of novel approaches to combat in the new traditional-style RPGs.

Namco's Tales of Destiny, due out in the third quarter, is a perfect example. This PlayStation sequel to the Super Famicom cart Tales of Phantasia is traditional in every way except when it comes to combat. Encounters with



Combat in Namco's Tales of Destiny looks more like a 16-bit side-scroller, complete with button combos for attacks.

enemies shift the game into a pseudo Side-scrolling Mode, in which you send each party member into action with specific button and joystick combos. Each character wields a unique sword that can unleash different slashes and spells, and like a regular character, these mystical swords gain experience, strength and new attacks throughout the game.



As with FFVII the camera angles change to best accommodate the action. Transition from exploration to combat is smoother, though.



powerful creature—often a combination of numerous animals or even plants that are instilled with Eve's malevolent intent. As the game progresses, Eve's parasite sets up a "nest" in the Central Park Zoo, and before long snakes, bears, birds and monkeys all get horribly mutated, as Eve continues to rampage through the city.

Fortunately though, with all of these mutations hell-bent on destroying the world, Aya is armed with a fair amount of weaponry. Starting the game with an automatic handgun, she later picks up more powerful weapons. Control of the combat has evolved quite significantly since FFVII, too. Although the system used is fundamentally the same—with Active-Time bars filling up as you prepare for each attack—Aya can move around the battleground in real time to avoid taking damage. And just as Cloud can increase his abilities with Materia in FFVII, Aya soon learns to manipulate the Mitochondria (or "Parasite Energy" as it's referred to in the game) within her own system. Just as you'd expect, battles can get spectacular.

What really sets PE apart is that it's a true international collaboration between noted Japanese and U.S. talent. Script writer and game designer Takayuki Tokita has previously been responsible for Chrono Trigger and FFIV, while battle designer Yoshihiko Maekawa was the director on both Super Mario RPG and FFVI. U.S. artists Steve Gray and Darnell Williams are both in charge of much of the CG work throughout the game, and Gray is noted for his work on the movies *True Lies* and *Apollo 13*. Finally, musician Yoko Shimomura composed for Super Mario RPG and Front Mission.

This broader, collaborative approach to development along with the adoption of a more mainstream sci-fi story should help push PE into as many homes as its predecessor. The game hits Japan on March 29. Let's just hope we see the U.S. release soon after.

Dragon Warrior
NES, 1989

Phantasy Star II
Genesis, 1989

Final Fantasy
NES, 1990

Dragon Warrior II
NES, 1990

Shadow Madness, due on the PlayStation by the end of the year, also lets gamers get more down and dirty on the RPG battlefield. Created by Crave Entertainment (one of the very few American console RPG developers), the game borrows a few combat style points from Super Mario RPG. As in that classic, success in Shadow Madness combat demands quick button taps at just the right moments. "We want to make fewer battles that you have to think about more," said Ted Woolsey, Crave's VP of marketing. "You're not gonna get through the game's battles as easily as just tapping the

Also Squared Away...

Parasite Eve may be getting the most hype, but it certainly isn't the only Square RPG that could hit U.S. shores by year's end. Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon, which came out in Japan in December, is a strong contender for U.S. release. The game—actually the third in the Mysterious Dungeon series—stars the familiar feathered Square mascot (and a mooglesidekick) who you guide through miles of dungeons that change in layout each time you play.

Another hot Square property is Xenogears, which hit Japan in February. Like Parasite Eve, this traditional RPG offers a sci-fi setting, and its incredible polygonal landscapes and spritely characters make Xenogears Square's answer to Grandia. The game's story revolves around huge robot suits called gears, which your characters can slip into during battles to unleash super-charged attacks (the suits are best saved for Bosses and other tough enemies, since they have a limited fuel supply). The battle system is especially innovative; instead of plowing through menus, you perform button combos when your attack gauge is at its peak. With more than 20 minutes of FMV created by Production IG (the folks behind the Ghost in the Shell anime), Xenogears is yet another highly polished Square RPG.

And finally there's the attention-grabbing Brave Fencer Musashiden, due for Japanese release this summer and reportedly compatible with Sony's Dual Shock Controller. This action RPG—seemingly Square's attempt to take on Zelda 64—is set in a 3D world in which the hero can wield swords in both hands and slash enemies while running and jumping (it's heavy with platform-game elements). Unlike most action RPGs, the game is composed of levels, with a huge Boss guarding the end of each stage. Square has high



Brave Fencer Musashiden is a hot contender in the first-PlayStation-game-to-look-like-Zelda 64 contest.

hopes for this fantastic-looking game, and it may even become the first in a series.

As with Parasite Eve, neither Sony nor Square have announced when and if they'll bring any of these RPGs to the U.S. But chances for stateside release are extremely good, considering the booming success of the genre in America.



Square's stunning Xenogears (top) and Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon (bottom) are both highly likely to hit the U.S.



Which character from the Street Fighter series made a cameo appearance in a Super NES RPG?

same button over and over to skip through menus, like in other RPGs. You have to time buttons both on the receiving and giving end of attacks so that you either amplify or change their affect. It's not just endless battles, but fewer of them, they make more sense and you have to work a little harder."

Square's most recent RPG, SoGa Frontier, throws a few new twists into traditional RPG combat, too. Instead of battles popping up randomly (as in Final Fantasy VII and nearly every other non-action RPG—except Earthbound—over the

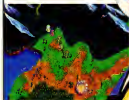
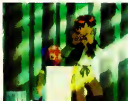


Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete

Working Designs, August



As you can see here, the quality of the animation in *Silver Star Story* (right) has been improved dramatically over the original game (*Lunar: The Silver Star*, below).



Lunar's improved battle system allows for more strategic turn-based combat, without a bunch of annoying menus.



Lunar: *Silver Star Story* may not be as unique or innovative as other RPGs covered in this feature, but don't let that turn you off to the game. It's a remake of one of the hottest RPGs ever (Lunar: *The Silver Star* for the Sega CD), and it's finally getting its due credit on a mainstream platform—the PlayStation.

Lunar tells the story of Alex, a young adventurer who embarks on a quest that could save the world.

Sounds familiar, right? But this story—and how it's told—is one of the game's greatest aspects. Presented in Working Designs' trademark humorous but exceptionally well-written manner, and complemented by over 45 minutes of spectacular FMV anime, Lunar's story is captivating.

Unlike some other remakes (which for the most part have

fortunately stayed in Japan), this game actually improves upon the original in every aspect. The graphics are enhanced, the music is redone, and—best of all—many story elements have been altered and expanded upon. The key point is where Alex and co. board the boat to Meribia early in the game. In the original version, Luna stays behind, but in the remake she comes with, and from there lots of little things branch out and change for an almost entirely new experience. Trust us—fans of the original will not be let down.

We've also learned of new, subtle changes in the PlayStation version. For one, there will be about 300 percent less text overall. Most of the mixed text is from shop conversations and other minor areas that really won't be missed. Another change is related to the text itself. For the first time, Lunar will have—drum roll please—lowercase text! No more CAPS LOCK making you feel like everybody's screaming, as was the case with the Sega CD versions of Lunar and Lunar 2. And speaking of Lunar 2, the Saturn remake is nearly finished in Japan. Will a PlayStation port be far behind? Our Magic 8 Ball says, "Count on it..."



Clean-Li was hidden in one of Breath of Fire's towns as an NPC.

● Dragon Warrior III
NES, 1991

● Final Fantasy II
Super NES, 1991

● Wozung
Sega CD, 1991

● Dragon Warrior IV
NES, 1992

last 10 years), you can see each gang of monsters scurrying through the dungeons. Hence, you have a slight chance of zipping past enemy parties, thus dodging another time-consuming round of turn-based combat. And SeGe Frontier isn't the only traditional RPG to make getting from point A to point B much less of a hassle; Grendia for the Japanese Saturn and Lunar Silver Star Story Complete for the PlayStation make use of the same see-the-enemy-first feature. It seems developers are finally catching on to the idea that, yes, it's more than a little frustrating to

have your dungeon meanderings interrupted every 15 seconds by another drawn-out battle.

Speaking of battles, we're seeing a certain RPG sub-genre that deals mainly with combat finally catch on in the U.S. after years of popularity in Japan. The strategy RPG, which caught on big with American gamers when they played 1996's *Vandal Hearts* (and before that the subtly different *Dragon Force* and the *Shining Force* series), is carving its own growing niche among die-hard RPG fans, as proven by the success of *FF Tactics* and the just-released *Tactics*

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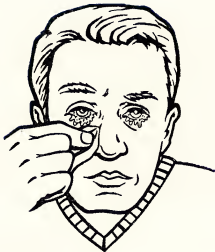
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Azure Dreams

Konami, May



Konami's latest RPG is a bit different from its last two PlayStation ones (*Saikoden* and *Vandal-Hearts*). *Azure Dreams* (abbreviated from its Japanese title, *Other Life*, *Azure Dreams*) is an interesting game that can best be described as a new-school dungeon dweller with a variety of unique and innovative twists that set it apart from anything we've seen thus far.

Azure Dreams revolves around a town called *Monsbaia*, which you help develop, and a huge nearby tower called the *Tower of Monsters*. The tower is where the bulk of the game takes place. Inside, you seek out treasure and destroy monsters to gain experience and make money. Then you use that hard-earned dinero back in town to create more structures and buy better equipment. This alone sounds rather basic, but the depth of gameplay involved with everything you do is what makes this game so enjoyable. For example, in the tower, each level is randomly generated, making for a new and different experience every time you play (similar to the *Mysterious Dungeon* series in Japan). Battle

takes place in real time in these dungeons, and you can enlist the help of numerous kinds of monsters that you first catch (as *Monster Eggs*), and then breed into full-grown critters. Two monsters can travel with you at any time, and how they grow depends on how you nurture them.

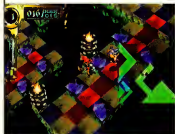
Azure Dreams also offers a fairly non-linear story. Decisions you make anytime during play will directly affect the game's outcome. You might choose to help someone at one point, while at another you'll ignore a plea for assistance. You even get to work on acquiring a love interest! There are seven eligible ladies who you can try to win over. You can even save different romances to the *Memory Card* and play out each episode separately, which can result in completely different endings. Minigames abound, too (like bowling, monster racing and more), and we're sure there's plenty more we've yet to see.

With all its different gameplay styles, *Azure Dreams* could very well be the "mutt" of RPGs. One thing's for sure—it'll be hard to pass up when it hits stores in May, even if just out of curiosity.



In the over-world areas of *Azure Dreams*, you can rotate the screen completely in either direction, a common feature in 3D RPGs as of late.

Battles in the *Tower* take place in real time, and you can enlist the help of up to two monsters at a time during your journey.



This bridge leads to the *Tower of Monsters*, where a majority of *Azure Dreams*' gameplay takes place.

● **Zelda: A Link to the Past**
Super NES, 1992

● **Lunar: The Silver Star**
Sega CD, 1993

● **Secret of Mana**
Super NES, 1993

● **LandStalker**
Genesis, 1993

● **Shining Force**
Genesis, 1993

Ogre. The next big thing on the strategy-RPG horizon (not counting *Dragon Force II* in Japan) is *Atlas*' *Rebus* for the *PlayStation*. *Dua* in August, the game is geared toward strategy-RPG newbies. It doesn't feature the complex job system of *FF Tactics* or the hours-long battles of *Tactics Ogre*. Instead, players concentrate on building an army of monsters and an arsenal of spells from 160 spellcasters, then unleashing the creatures in battle. *Rebus* also offers two story lines—one for a boy, the other for a girl—that you pick at the game's outset. Like *FF Tactics*, *Rebus'*

battlefields are polygonal, while its sprite fighters are the handwork of Yoshitaka Amano, the artist who designed the characters for *Final Fantasy I* through *VI*.

Action RPGs are getting a bit of an overhaul, too. The most obvious example of a new take on an old genre is *Zelda 64*. But another innovation in real-time hack-and-slash is hitting the *PlayStation* from an unlikely source—the PC. Electronic Arts' port of *Diablo* retains all the visceral, Gauntlet-inspired action that made the game such a huge PC hit. You get the miles of never-the-same-layout-twice



During the game Lune will come across two very important gals—one of whom is introduced when Lune barges in on her shower.



Published in Japan by Sony, The Granstream Saga is one of the more interesting RPGs headed our way this year, courtesy of T*HQ.

Set in the future, the game stars a boy named Lune who gets tangled in a huge quest that involves his father, a magic scepter, two beautiful girls and the devil (sounds like an episode of *Melrose Place*, no?).

Granstream is a top-down RPG with a lush, fully polygonal world. Everything moves along smoothly and the animation in most parts is very nice. Lune can move in eight directions, and the camera can be rotated in eight directions as well, allowing you to search behind crates, stairways and so on. The game makes use of some dramatic camera angles, as well (when certain events are happening), but the core of the gameplay takes place from the standard top-down view.

Like so many other RPGs these days, Granstream's most unique aspect is its battle system. All battles take place in real time, with you controlling your character's every movement. When you enter battle (which, by the way, is not random—

all enemies are at specific points in the game and can be seen on screen), your scepter produces your weapon and armor, and you go to work. You can move around your enemy freely, and you can dash forward and back, or side to side to evade attacks.

Depending on your weapon, you can unleash special combos that cause multiple hits of damage. You can use magic spells, too, but most of them are not attack related.

Granstream's only possible downside is its extreme linearity, but that's not necessarily a bad thing (generally, linear RPGs have stronger stories and more structured play). We'll let you know more when we receive an English version of the game.



Granstream Saga's battle system is refreshingly unique, with real-time battles that give you complete control over your character.

Which, the only character to star in every Final Fantasy game (and, no, we're not talking about Chocobos)?



● **Breath of Fire**
Super NES, 1994

● **Mission of Gaid**
Super NES, 1994

● **Popful Mail**
Sega CD, 1994

● **Shining Force II**
Genesis, 1994

dungeons, the hordes of detailed monsters, the huge arsenal of weapons and the requisite Multiplayer Mode (although it only supports two players). Sure, many purists chide Diablo for being too arcade-like to be a console RPG, but its hybrid approach to role-playing makes it a game for everybody.

Just as the mechanics of RPGs are being tweaked left and right, the games are also finally getting away from their traditional castle, dungeons and countryside settings. Although RPGs set in modern locales have been common in Japan for years (see the Shin Megami Tensai series, of

which our *Revelations: Persona* is a spin-off), the true-grime cityscapes of *Perseus Eve* and future-shocked real estate in *Penzer Dregon Sage* are a far cry from the medievalized realms most often found in U.S. RPGs. And if you need another example that we're not in fantasy-land Kansas anymore, keep an eye out for *Earthbound 64*, due for the N64 DD in Japan this summer (with a possible U.S. release by Christmas). If—as word has it—*Earthbound 64* is a direct follow-up to its Super NES prequel, this offbeat Zelda 64-esque RPG should be set in sprawling suburbia, complete



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TEKKEN 3



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Forget about the super-deformed characters, talking animals and cutesy story lines of most old-school RPGs. Panzer Dragon Saga is a dark role-playing game that immerses you in a grim world so real, you'd think you were watching an epic movie.

The long (more than 30 minutes) intro introduces you to the Panzer universe, where nations war with ancient weapons dug up from the bowels of the planet. You play as Edge, a young guard on a remote excavation site. Your adventure starts when a burrower general assassinates your captain and steals a mysterious artifact from your post. We don't want to spoil any more of the story for you (since it's one of the

strongest points of this four-CD game), but let's just say it will draw you into its strange and fascinating world like few few RPGs can.

Another highlight of Panzer Dragon Saga is its amazing combat system. Fighting works a bit similar to the Final Fantasy RPGs, where you act in turns after short time increments. In Panzer, however, you have three time meters. As they build up, you get access to different actions and more powerful attacks.

But a Panzer game couldn't be complete without elements from the previous games in the series. In Saga, you can circle around opponents in 90-degree increments, looking for weak spots and staying out of harm's way (just as you would in Saga's two shooter predecessors).

Be careful, though—you'll be penalized for wasting too much time in combat. The faster you kill an enemy, the more experience points and better items you'll receive.

With its well-blended mix of science fiction and fantasy, and its unique and revolutionary combat system, Panzer Saga will be a role-playing experience unlike anything you've played before.



A guy named Cid appears in every FF game—usually in the form of an engineer. He's even in FF Tactics.

● **Phantasy Star II**
Genesis, 1994

● **Dark Wizard**
Sega CD, 1994

● **Final Fantasy III**
Super NES, 1994

● **Earthbound**
Super NES, 1995



The gameplay is complemented with exciting in-game cinemas (above) and lush full-motion video (below).



with ATMs, burger joints and shopping malls. Some of the scenery could be a little too familiar: It's rumored that this DD game'll let you map your own face onto the main character, courtesy of Nintendo's video-capture cartridges.

And then there are the RPGs that are so polished it's hard to pin down their specific innova-



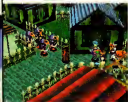
tion. *Breath of Fire III* looks to be a shining RPG. We'll get it to see how well it holds up when we review it.

tions. *Zelda 64*, of course, is one of them. So is Capcom's *Breath of Fire III*, due on the PlayStation in early April. While it packs all the dragonboy-grows-up flavor of its two Super NES prequels, *BoFIII*-like Konami's *Azura Dreams*—is also the ultimate mix-and-match RPG. At various points in the adventure you'll assemble a town with the help of a fairy work force (similar to the castle-building



Shining Force III

Sega, May



The plot of Shining Force III actually spreads out over three CDs (30-plus hours each), but right now only Scenario 1 is slated to be released here.

Battles are spread out over various kinds of terrain, which can affect your party's movement in several ways.



As in past Shining games, your party members can learn a variety of useful magic spells. Having a good healer around at all times is essential.

Assuming the ever-delayed Magic Knight Rayearth doesn't fall past its latest ship date, Shining Force III may well be the last Saturn RPG to be released in the U.S. when it hits stores in late May. Fortunately for RPG fans, this is a great way to go out.

Shining Force III continues the grand tradition of its Genesis (and Sega CD) predecessors by offering strategy-based battles with fancy graphics, RPG-like spells and level building and a great story line that progresses gradually after each battle. Like many strategy RPGs (such as Vandal-Hearts or Final Fantasy Tactics), the heart of the game lies in battle. Yet in Shining Force these battles are more simplified than the aforementioned two titles and, quite frankly, more fun. That's not to say they're not improved from past SF games; there are many new types of spells (including monster-summoning spells), and you can "bond" with other party members throughout the game to create teamwork, and thus an edge in battle.

Since the entire game is in a gorgeous 3D environment, you can rotate the playfield completely in

either direction at any time using the L and R buttons. You can also zoom in and out with the X button. This makes it easier to find hidden items that are concealed behind walls and other hard-to-see spots—especially useful when exploring towns and castles (which, by the way, is a major part of SFIII, unlike in the last game in the series, Shining Force CD).

But best of all (and possibly worst of all—read on), Shining Force III incorporates a new concept called the "Syndromicity System," where the game is actually spread out over three discs (which, in Japan at least, is being released about three months after the previous one) lets you play out a different side of the same large story—a very cool, innovative approach to RPG gaming. That's the best part. The worst part is we're likely to see only the first disc in the U.S., so how the whole story pans out may never be revealed here. That's pretty much sucks, but hey—beggars can't be choosers. At least we're getting a part of the trilogy. Perhaps Sega will release the remaining two CDs as a final "thank you" to Saturn fans who've stuck with the system until the end.

● Chrono Trigger
Super NES, 1995

● Lancer: Eternal Blue
Sega CD, 1995

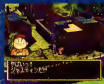
● Beyond Oasis
Genesis, 1995

● Light Crusader
Genesis, 1995

● Super Mario RPG
Super NES, 1996

portion of Sulkodan) and apprentice your character to various combat masters. There's even a dragon-gem system that lets you tailor the form of the half-men/half-dragon hero.

GamaArts' Grandia for the Saturn in Japan is another all-around excellent RPG. Let's forget for a sec that, like BoFIII and Xenogears, it's a beautiful polygonal game that



Grandia is one of those RPGs that makes you wanna learn Japanese to play it. Could it reach the States? Never say never.

lets you pan the camera. Grandia has become famous among game importers who lead its in-depth magic end combat system—specifically, the ability to power up and combine the elemental magics of earth, fire, water, etc. Unfortunately, there's no chance of Grandia ever coming to U.S. Saturn owners, but that doesn't mean stateside RPG fanatics are out of luck. Strong rumor has it the game will



Even though the story is based on the Japanese anime series, there are several events and sub-quests that are exclusive to the video game.



Each main character keeps a diary of events as the journey progresses. Some of their entries are rather hilarious.

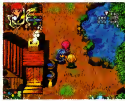
It's been in the works for more than two years now, but finally it looks as if Magic Knight Rayearth is nearing completion. This gorgeous-looking Saturn action RPG (which has been delayed numerous times, mainly due to licensing problems) is coming with a host of enhancements over the Japanese original, which already was one of the best games of its kind when released in August 1995.

Rayearth, which is based on a popular anime series in Japan (the manga is available in the U.S. from Mixx Publications), tells the story of three teenage girls who, while on a field trip to Tokyo Tower, are summoned to a faroff world where magic and fantasy collide.

We've previewed Rayearth before, so you know the basics of its gameplay—just think Zelda-style action with bright, vivid graphics and lots of anime flavor. But in the latest version we received from Working Designs, we found some interesting new features. One fault with the Japanese game is it's a bit on the easy side, so WD has enhanced the enemy AI—making them faster and more lethal, and Bosses are much more dangerous than they ever were. Another

change is that a lot of the pointless audio in the towns throughout the game (not the important plot stuff, but the less critical banter) has been taken out so that WD could add voice to the Diary entries that each character makes throughout the game. The whole diary thing is already a creative and useful way to go back and see how the story has progressed through the eyes of each main character, but now you'll be able to hear the characters read their diary entries. Even the diary text is improved—it's all hand-written!

Rayearth looks like it's going to be the final third-party Saturn game, and if you've stuck with the system this long, you'd be foolish to pass up this little gem.



● **Lufia II: Rise of the Sinistrals**
Super NES, 1996

● **Saikuden**
PlayStation, 1996

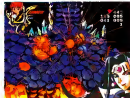
● **Revelations: Persona**
PlayStation, 1996

● **Dark Saviour**
Saturn, 1996

come to one of the consoles here. Whether it's the PlayStation or Ketcha remains to be seen.

At the same time RPGs are making these new strides, we're also seeing a fundamental change in the way the games themselves are developed. "There seems to be two trends in the genre," Crave Entertainment's Woolsey said. "One is the swamping cinematic blockbuster trend, and the other is the more sublime story- and word-driven type games." Woolsey, who before coming to Crave worked for Square, where he translated Final Fantasy III and several

Each of the three girls will learn powerful spells during the course of the game that are essential to victory.



Say you're stuck in Myrula's Lost Woods in the original Legend of Zelda. Which route do you follow to escape?

other RPGs, explained that the blockbuster-type titles are the RPG equivalents of Hollywood event flicks. He's talking about gitzzy, hotly marketed, hotly anticipated games like Final Fantasy VII, Parasite Eve and next year's epic Dragon Quest VII. The less-flashy titles are...well, everything else. These are the more traditional, no-hype games such as Sage Frontiers and Tales of Destiny, which do not present every plot point through a cinema or voice-over.

Die-hard RPG fans will always turn into these solid but lesser-known RPGs. But can such games achieve market-



Quest 64

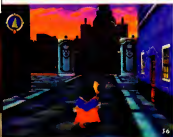


Name Rick

"Hey there! Have you seen a silver-haired man with ear-sharp eyes? Where has that knave gone?"



T*HQ, June



The little compass in the top-left corner of the screen displays the time of day. Every two minutes or so of real time makes up for about an hour of game time.

Quest 64 is a significant game for several reasons, but the most important may be the simplest—it's the first RPG for the N64. Developed by Imagineer in Japan, Quest 64 will actually hit the U.S. first.

You guide Brian, a young Spirit Tamer out to find his missing father, who disappeared while trying to retrieve a stolen book of magic. The game isn't quite the action RPG that Zelda 64 will be (where you have full control over the battles), but then it's not quite the traditional RPG that, say, Final Fantasy III was either (where the battles are turn-based). In Quest, fights take place in real time, but they occur randomly.

When a battle begins, you're confined to a certain area where you can move freely and attack as you wish, but you can't move outside of that area until the next round of attacks. Aside from that novelty, the game is strictly traditional. Brian cannot jump, and the majority of the game takes place moving from area to area, collecting items, talking to

people and exploring dungeons.

Quest's magic system, however, is unique. As a Spirit Tamer, you have control over the four elements (wind, earth, water and fire), and each of the four C buttons corresponds to one of them. You can mix spells for different effects (there are more than 50 spells in all), and you can increase the strength level of each element by gaining experience in battle or finding power-ups.

One other innovation is the passage of time in the game. It's not a new concept—but it's not used often enough in RPGs, and this is the first time it'll be put to use in a 3D environment (needless to say, the graphical contrast between day and night is very nice). Your compass in the upper left-hand corner of the screen guides you along, while its red dot indicates the time of day. Certain events may only happen at night (or only in the daytime), so time will play an important factor in gameplay.

T*HQ is planning to release Quest 64 in June. That should give RPG-starved N64 owners plenty of time to see everything this huge game has to offer before RPG heavyweight Zelda 64 hits home this fall.



After choosing a spell (top), you unleash it on your enemies (middle) and then hopefully put the opposing pests away for good (bottom).



Head north, west, south, west—a route that leads to the cemetery and its hidden Magical Sword.

● The Legend of Oas Saturn, 1996

● Dragon Force Saturn, 1996

● Shining the Holy Ark Saturn, 1997

● Vandal-Hearts PlayStation, 1997

wide success when they share shelf space with the mainstream masterpieces from Square—which after all has hundreds of programmers and artists and millions of dollars to pour into each product? "People are always asking companies why on Earth would you try to do anything RPG if there's Square?" Woolsey said. "The bottom line is the same as in Hollywood. Why does anybody make a movie if there's James Cameron or Schwarzenegger? Because that's just one kind of movie, and it's a blockbuster, but there are other stories to tell in small-budget movies. It's the

same with RPGs. There's room for both types of games."

And with RPGs suddenly in mainstream demand, there's room for plenty of publishers to license Japanese RPGs for American gamers, too. Some are fairly new at bringing out these games over here. T*HQ is one example, as is Namco, whose only previous U.S. RPG was Great Greed for the Game Boy. This rush to release RPGs has some in the industry worried. "A lot of people who haven't done RPGs or haven't licensed them and have no idea what they're about or what players want are going to jump in and license a bunch of



The Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time

Nintendo, 4th Qtr.



City scenes in *Zelda 64* look phenomenal. Note the detail in the leaves.



The latest shots not only show how beautiful the graphics are in *Zelda*, but they are also an effective showcase for the true graphical power of the N64.

If FFVII kicked off the RPG Revolution, it's surely *Zelda* that will run it to the end zone. With development headed up by Shigeru Miyamoto, it probably packs more gameplay innovations than the rest of the games in this feature put together. If you've been reading recent issues of EGM, you're up to speed on much of the information that has gently trickled from Nintendo. Many of the specific details are still shrouded in secrecy. Yet we have been able to track down some new screen shots and information.

As we've said before, it's *Zelda*'s subtleties—aside from the obvious graphical excellence of the game—that will truly set this apart from any other action RPG. The oft-reported horse scene is unique in itself, but most importantly it's the control system that will become a milestone in RPG history. The simplicity of its design, allowing action buttons to be context sensitive while also allowing a camera "lock-on" to make viewing the battles easier will no doubt be copied in other "Zelda wanna-bes" before the end of the year.

Since we last reported on the game in issue #103, we've seen that there are now weapons unique to the differently aged Links. While the older Link makes use of his sword and shield, as well as a bow and arrow, young Link has a boomerang weapon that only he can use. We've also found that the variety of attacks Link can perform on his enemies will have differing effects on what object is revealed once the assailant is destroyed.

We have also learned that the Rumble Pak will be used to startling effect throughout the game. Rather than simply throbbing away and occasionally jolting you during fights, it will be used to convey Link's surroundings in a way similar to 3080's "Snowboarding" (previewed on page 30 this month). Differences in the terrain texture will be passed through to the player via subtle changes to the hummings that emanate from the Pak.

If any RPG can be described as "revolutionary" then this is it. While other games in this feature are here because of their different approach to story, setting and combat, *Zelda* takes a tried, tested and familiar formula and turns it on its head. Now, if only they'd announce the official U.S. name for the game and release date (it could hit as early as October).



The classic Boomerang returns, but only the younger Link can wield it.

RPGing on the Go

Let's face it—even the hardest of the hardcore RPG fans can't stay home ALL the time. For you, there is the Game Boy. Sure, there aren't THAT many RPGs available for Nintendo's undying portable system, but of the few that are available, there exist some truly excellent games. For example, no RPG—heck, no gamer period—should be allowed to wait the Earth without a copy of *The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening*, regarded by many as the best Game Boy game of all time. Finding a copy should be no problem at all, since Nintendo recently re-released the game as a part of its Player's Choice series of million-seller titles. Then there's the *Final Fantasy Legend* series (FF Legend I, II and III), which are more traditional RPGs—and great ones at that—from the wizards at Square. Those three games and *Final Fantasy Adventure* are all being re-released this April by Sunsoft. If you haven't got 'em yet, get 'em. Also keep an eye out for Nintendo's upcoming Pocket Monsters RPGs ("Pokémon" in the U.S.), slated for release this fall.



Final Fantasy Adventure is the prequel to *Secret of Mana*, and a great *Zelda*-like adventure for the Game Boy.

● **Wild Arms**
PlayStation, 1997

● **Final Fantasy VII**
PlayStation, 1997

● **Alundra**
PlayStation, 1998

● **Final Fantasy Tactics**
PlayStation, 1998

● **Tactics Ogre**
PlayStation, 1998

crap and release it," Ireland said. "That's my only fear. If you get too much of that, you'll kill the market quickly." Don't start worrying just yet, though. As we've shown, too many revolutionary titles are on the way, and our Review Crew will always highlight the hits from the masses. And if you still can't find an RPG you like, create your own with ASCII Entertainment's RPG Maker—a PlayStation title due by Christmas that lets you design your own adventures. The RPG game's momentum certainly won't stop once Link makes his triumphant charge this fall. Next year will

bring us another super RPG lineup—including Konami's *Dear Blue*, *Dragon Quest VII* and *Final Fantasy VIII*—to get excited about. And as long as developers keep pumping out solid, innovative role-playing games, the new army of RPG fanatics will stick with the genre until...well, they're an old army of RPG fanatics. "People have been getting turned on to role-playing games for the last 10 years," Ireland said, "but they just didn't have enough of a choice of games in English to play. Now they do, and once you make a person an RPG player with a good game, they're that way for life."

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Review Crew

Our Philosophy

Expect a slightly refurbished Review Crew section next month, but for now... well, you know the drill. Each reviewer gives a game an overall score, which is displayed behind the review and based on how the game compares to other titles for the same system. In addition, the reviewers rate each game's graphics, sound, magnitude and replay value. The averages of these scores are listed at the bottom.

Editors' Choice



Gold Awards go to games whose average score equals 9.0 or higher.



Games that average at least an 8.0 receive Silver Awards.

Rating Scale

10-Perfection

An absolutely flawless experience. It doesn't get any better.

9-Virtually Flawless

Drop what you're doing and buy this nearly perfect game.

8-Semiradical

Delivers everything you'd want in a game, despite minor flaws.

7-Worky

A solid title that you won't regret buying.

6-Good, Not Great

Sure, it has its problems, but it's still fun to play.

5-Average

Not great, not crap. A fair bet that isn't for everybody.

4-Rent First

We have problems here. Definitely try before you buy.

3-Time Waster

Playing it for more than 10 minutes gives you a migraine.

2-Don't Even Rent

The only spot in playing this garbage is to make fun of it.

1-Flush it

Run for your life if you see it, or use it as a coaster.

Shawn Smith



Besides getting frustrated while making his way through *Reboot*, *Speed Racer* and *Shadow Master*, Shawn has been playing the snafu out of *Blitz*. Aside from this, he has been sitting around anticipating the upcoming figures from various toy companies. It's weird out sometimes he'll sit there, talk to his boys and tell them about the ones he's going to buy!

Current Favorites

SuGa Frontier
NFL Blitz (Arcade)
1080° Snowboarding
Wario Land II

Favorite Genres:
Action/Adventure

Dan Hsu



Current Favorites

Diablo
NFL Blitz (Arcade)
Wario Land II
Mirvid vs. Cupson (Arcade)

Favorite Genres:
Strategy/Puzzle

Shoe is upset he enjoys *Wario Land II* so much. Why? 'Cause he wishes the Game Boy would die. He's tired of all the marketing. Wario also agrees not to keep the GB ever running high. What Shoe really wants is for Nintendo to make a portable SNES (Home mode). He claims he's willing to give up nude sunbathing for that one. Help us Nintendo!!!

Current Favorites

NFL Blitz (Arcade)
Diablo
Mega Man Legends
SuGa Frontier

Favorite Genres:
RPGs/Action

Crispin Boyer



Cris wants to know who sent an NFL Blitz coin-up to the office. He can't work by the thing without playing it. And when he's not playing it, he and everyone else are in line for one more game. That freakin' machine has everyone wired an adrenaline, skipping sleep and nearly missing the deadline. Man. Maybe the competition's behind this.

Current Favorites

NFL Blitz (Arcade)
Emulator
MU (Fantasy Ken Griffey Jr. Double)

Favorite Genres:
Sports/Strategy

Kraig Kujawa



Kraig is a sick, sick man. Ever since we got that NFL Blitz arcade machine in the office, he's become consumed by it. But it's not just him. Although the others won't admit it, they are just as caught up in Blitzmania, especially that John Riccardi. Kraig's record is currently 78-13 (81-89 games!), something he's hoping his boss doesn't see...

Current Favorites

NFL Blitz (Arcade)
Wario Land II
R-Type (Japanese)
Pinzoo (Dragon Saga)

Favorite Genres:
RPGs/Adventure

John Riccardi



John has been hopelessly addicted to Blitz since it got here, currently standing in second place with a record of 69-20. He does hold four of the six world records on our machine though, and his offense is roused NFL. Since we're on the subject of stats, let's take a look at his work efficiency rating since Blitz arrived. Ah, what do you know... 200 percent.

Current Favorites

NFL Blitz (Arcade)
Wario Land II
R-Type (Japanese)
Pinzoo (Dragon Saga)

Favorite Genres:
RPGs/Adventure

John Davison



John's the new boy sitting in the editor's chief chair around here. Traveling to the stony wastes of Lombard from the U.K., this is his first month as our new boss.

Previously working for just about every kind of games magazine you can think of, John has edited and written for *Sega*, *Nintendo*, *Game Boy* and *PC* titles. Key back in the early days he even reviewed Alan's ST & Amiga games for a living. A big fan of shooting things and then actually thinking about stuff, John's "air-tower" grants include: most 3D shooters (*Duke* and *GoldenEye* at the top of the heap), as well as *GG*, *Tomb Raider* and *FFVII*. We also have a beard. And long hair. And an accent.

Current Favorites

Emulator
NFL Blitz (Arcade)
Diablo
Wario Land II

Favorite Genres: Action/Adventure

Kelly Rickards



Current Favorites

Gen: Enter the Gungeon
Nine Far Spind III
SF3: 2nd Impact (Arcade)
NFL Blitz (Arcade)

Favorite Genres:
Fighting/Action

Kelly has been seen trudging around several arcades recently, still rambling about *Demeg* and *Demegs* last month, a beery-eyed Kelly vowed he would never forget the roots of his gaming career, and so began his journey back to the arcade. Most of his time has been spent playing *SF3: 2nd Impact*, a though Blitz also strikes his fancy.

Sushi-X



Sushi reflexes to jump on the Blitz bandwagon, despite repeated claims that he could manhandle any of us at the game with his eyes closed. Apparently he thinks Blitz is the next version of *Street Fighter* or something, but John and Kraig have vowed to get the arcade murder in his place. That is, if they can manage to find the elusive naja...

Current Favorites

Street Fighter: EX 2 (Arcade)
Marvel vs. Capcom (Arcade)
Bloody Roar
Diablo

Favorite Genres:
Fighting/RPGs

RAMPAGE: WORLD TOUR



Publisher: Midway
Developer: Saffire
Featured in: EGM #105

Number Of Players: 1-3

I always loved Rampage in the arcades, as it was one of the first games where you could be the bad guy. World Tour does a great job of not changing the gameplay a bit from the original while sprinkling in some welcome additions. I do wish they could think of other ways to spice the game up a bit, but it seems they did do just about everything short of making the game 3D (and I'm glad they didn't do that, since that seems to be the trend in retro-gaming). New to Rampage: World Tour are various locales around the world, bonus levels, three-way play (they should have made it four), lots of secrets (money, bonus items) and plenty of different things to destroy. There's even hordes of new adversarial good guys to eat, punch and stomp on. Even with all of these lovely additions, something still seems missing from World Tour, but it's hard to put a finger on. Perhaps my gaming tastes have changed over the years (this is after all, basically the same gameplay as the original Rampage that I used to love), but I only like to play WT in small amounts of say, 30 minutes or so. Unless I do that, or play cooperatively with friends, it quickly gets boring to me. So, unless you just really love Rampage, this remake of the short-lived, but fun gameplay seems tailor made to be a rental. Play it for a while, and enjoy.

Kraig

Best Feature: Lots Of Levels

Worst Feature: Very Repetitive Gameplay

Yes the original was a classic, but as tastes mature, you have to acknowledge the need for more substance in a game. Smashing buildings and killing people may sound fun, but the way it's implemented here is just plain boring. As a one-player game you grow tired of it in seconds. As a multiplayer game, it takes minutes. Dull, dull, yawns, yawns, bores. I'd like to say it's a good party game, but it's not. So, your money.

John D

Besides the Three-player Mode and the ability to change the color of your monster, WT is basically the same old thing. The game is fun but level after level of doing the same thing just gets old. It may be refreshing once in a while to play a game that doesn't have a complex plot, busy interface system or flashy graphics, but Rampage just doesn't hold my interest. Luckily the Three-player Mod. adds a bit of replayability to the game.

Shawn

Rampage starts off rather slow but it quickly grows on you until it's inevitable to put down. There's really nothing innovative about the gameplay—it's hardly different from the classic arcade original. Still, somehow it's such a fun play-alike and like RoboRaid™, you can just zone out with it for hours at a time. There are tons of stunts and power-ups, but admittedly there's little variety between them. If you liked the original, check out WT.

John R

YOSHI'S STORY



Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
Featured in: EGM #104

Number Of Players: 1

I can't begin to tell you how disappointed I am with Yoshi's Story. The Japanese version took all of a day to master, and it had me begging for more. How could they make it so short and easy? Why was the gameplay simplified so much from Yoshi's Island? Why were there so few Bosses, and why were they so damn easy? I figured the U.S. version might be improved a bit, but alas—it's here, I've gone through it all (again, in the better part of a day), and unfortunately, the changes are minimal at best and do not affect gameplay whatsoever. Fans of the original Yoshi's Island (one of the best platformers of all time) are going to be shaking their heads at the simplicity of this sequel. This game is very obviously aimed at the 6-and-under crowd, and while I can definitely see my niece or nephew enjoying it for its great graphics, overwhelming cuteness and ease of play, I—as a huge fan of Yoshi's Island—an utterly disappointed. Aside from the graphics, Y is better than this game in nearly every way: gameplay, variety, depth—you name it. The little eels called hidden on each stage (new to the U.S. version) are a diversion of best, and the message they spell out isn't worth the effort. Rent it for your kids, enjoy it for a couple of hours yourself—but don't get your hopes up. This is not Yoshi's Island.

John R

Best Feature: Gorgeous Graphics

Worst Feature: Too Short, Too Easy, Too Boring

Well, after a lot of anticipation, this game has really let me down. It's not that this is a bad game—it's not. There just isn't enough of it. You can literally beat the game in under two hours, which is utterly ridiculous. Nintendo would rather have you go through the game and choose multiple paths (thus beating the game several times), and find "hidden" items, letters to get more playability. I say just make a better game, and there it is.

Kraig

This is, hands-down, the cutest game on the planet. And it's close to being the greatest platform game, too, if there was just more to it. Nintendo got nearly everything right—the control, graphics, music and sound off to an all-time high. Now why aren't there more bosses, bosses and secrets to keep me busy longer than a weekend? Still, like the original, YS is a work of art. But one rental is probably all you'll need to appreciate it.

Crispin

Being a fan of old-school 2D side-scrollers, I had high hopes for Yoshi. While the graphics and sound sure lived up to my expectations, the gameplay didn't. Don't get me wrong—the play is great, but with only 70 levels it's over far too fast and the Marios and coin letters don't offer any real reward for finding them. It's great for kids, but for a vet like myself, it's just not enough. I wanted more challenge, more secrets and more depth. Sorry N.

Sushi

BLOODY ROAR



Publisher: SCEA
Developer: Hudson Soft
Featured in: EGM #104

Number Of Players: 1-2

Bloody Roar's animal appearance may give the impression of a gimmicky fighter, but this is far from the truth. Not only does this game possess depth but it is as fast and furious as the creatures it portrays. Visually speaking, it definitely looks good, but to see these characters engage in flashy combat is even more impressive. The engine borrows some of the best features from several fighters. The speed and wall juggling is reminiscent of Fighting Vipers. Quick attacks and bouncing walls make for corner traps and cool juggling. Passive blocking, sidestepping and counter attacks are similar to Tekken 3. All of these defensive options add a great amount of depth and keep BR from being "just another button basher." Still, it's not a tough fighter to get into. For the most part the moves are simple taps or familiar half-circles. Also, the controls are precise and require little practice to get the timing down. Furthermore, there's the game's main attraction: the morphing ability. Beast Mode gives you unique moves, enhanced range and the ability to regain some health. For those who want options, it got them! Everything from Practice Modes, secret rewards and even an art gallery. I have to admit being a sucker for its animal attraction, but it could have used more characters and unique fighting styles.

Sushi

Best Feature: Beast Mode

Worst Feature: Chosen Story Line

Bloody Roar is the fighting game for everybody. Its massive moves list borrows from just about every fighter (although its super-fast engine is most similar to Fighting Vipers), making it easy to get into. While random BR's mask may work fine, a player's better off choosing a genuine one. The counters and boss' (not the) traps make BR surprisingly deep. The game is also flashy, with Soul Blade and Star Gladiator put together.

Crispin

Playing a lot like Fighting Vipers, Bloody Roar borrows enough new ideas to make it something worth checking out. The online system isn't really built in since on the PlayStation 2, but the addition of the E-As mode makes for some interesting combat. Smashing your opponent into a wall before tearing into them with your claws is conveyed very convincingly, making this a very satisfying two-player game.

John D

Gameplay wise, BR exhibits straightforward moves and short move-direction combos. Since most of these moves are dived at (based on E, Forward + X), rather than hitting based on Half-Circle Back + X, it's really easy to jump in and have fun. On the down side, only two or (when morphed) three buttons are used in BR which limits your options during a fight. If you're a casual fighter fan, this is it. Hardcore fans should look elsewhere.

Kelly

DEAD OR ALIVE



Publisher: Irem
Developer: Irem
Featured in: EGM 110A

Dead or Alive in the arcade used Sega's Model 1 board (which powered previous hits VFA, Fighting Vipers and more). Therefore, DOA has the look and feel of a Sega game, but with depth, challenge and bigger hits like Tekken series. The gameplay is comparable to Soul Blade and Mace—where button tapping gets you some cool moves and combos—but more experienced players will get higher combo strings. **I'm weary of any fighting game that has only one punch button and one kick button.** DOA, however, offers the most variety possible with this "limitation." The characters flow extremely well, and having only two attack buttons actually makes it easier to chain attacks. The third of the three buttons is a counter or reversal button. This is the same as the "hold back and throw" reversal found in Tekken, but now it is an integral and easily executable part of the combat. Two characters have been added, raising the total count to 12, and the old characters all have new animations and moves. DOA picks numerous secrets, including two characters, new outfits and other features that are unlocked as you beat various modes. DOA's simple fighting engine is fun, but hardcore fighting fans may pass it up for a game with greater depth.

Sushi

What this lacks in character design it makes up for in two other areas; namely the peppy nature of the young lady characters' chests and the fantastic reversal system. Checking a move and pushing back against your opponent is extremely satisfying when you can pull it off. This may not have the style or flair of say, Tekken, but the use of a character's weight and inertia makes a trail for other games to follow.

John D

Dead or Alive just isn't my cup of tea. It's a solid game, with lots of technique, but it's not terribly exciting. The best part of the game is the reversal system (bouncy moves makes added). But after throwing a few here and there, I found myself looking for more exciting fighters, like the Tekken. If you're looking for something that won't take a while to master, then Dead or Alive may be for you. It's not for the casual fighting fan.

Dan

You can love this better-than-arcade port for its beautiful women and their physics-defying physiques, but **DOA's got brain, too.** Its rapid-fire fighting engine is innovative, combining the intuitive moves of Virtua Fighter with the button-slopping frenzy of Tekken (and the counter-block system of Tekken 3). You get the standard extras—unlocking an excellent Training Mode—and lots of secrets. The new soundtracks rock, too.

Crispin

Number Of Players: 1-2

Best Feature: Unlimited "first Gemplay"

Worst Feature: Unrealistic bounce-ass

www.irem.com/jp

VISUALS 8 SOUND 7 INGENUITY 7 REPLAY 7

DIABLO



Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Climax Int., Ltd.
Featured in: EGM 110B

Partly responsible for the resurgence of later act RPGs on the PC, this iconic Diablo was more in common with Gauntlet than it does Final Fantasy. Basically it's an isometric "run around hitting and zapping things" game that features huge, sprawling randomly generated levels that take you all the way to the very depths of hell. There are hundreds of bad guys to smash throughout the game, and loads of items to pick up, use, sell or throw at the monsters. Using the basic game setup, the control system can seem fairly cumbersome. Wandering around and attacking stuff is fine—but manipulating inventory items and taking advantage of the extensive magic system (fireballs, lightning spells, healing, etc.) can slow the game down a lot. Fortunately you can customize the control setup, and using some button combos works out of Origin's Wing Commander II (the fiddliest PS game of all time) can speed up gameplay enormously. As a single-player experience, **Diablo is fine**, but not the greatest game ever. Play it as a two-player game though and you'll be well on your way to **Diablo's a 10**.

Warrior or Rogue and I guarantee you'll be completely addicted. Diablo's sound is so damn fantastic (cool music), and as long as you've got someone to play with, it's possibly the best co-op game out there.

John D

It may look simple. It may look choppy. It may look totally non-RPGish. But Diablo is a surprisingly deep action RPG that has ported well to the PlayStation. What makes Diablo stand out are its hundreds of items—armor, weapons, spells, etc.—you can find or buy, and equipping your character just right demands an amazing amount of strategy. But make sure you play **It Two** player, which is 30 times more fun than going solo.

Crispin

If you didn't get a chance to play this on the PC, I recommend picking it up. This action RPG has a lot going for it: fun two-player Co-Op Mode, great graphics and addictive gameplay. Think of this game as a 3D Gauntlet, and barring a few RPG elements (itemies, magical items, experience points, etc.) shown in a highly recommend **Diablo** for two gamers with a lot of time on their hands. Crispin and I had a blast for hours.

Dan

VISUALS 8 SOUND 8 INGENUITY 8 REPLAY 7

JUDGE DREDD



Publisher: Activision
Developer: Geminis
Featured in: N/A

Ahh... I've always dreamed of a Judge Dredd video game. After all, movie/comic book games always turn out well (note the sarcasm here). Seriously, you can be the biggest Dredd fan in the world. You can also be the biggest light-gun shooter fan in the world. But I doubt anyone can enjoy this dreadful game (sorry, I couldn't resist there). First of all, this is a big knockoff of Midway's FMV light-gun games, Area 51 and Maximum Force, two very mediocre games to be clering. Second, many innocents look like murderers—so you'll be frustrated at not killing your first dozen or so. Third, you can't always tell what you're supposed to be shooting at, or what's shooting at you (because the screen can get so cluttered at times). This isn't exactly bad (everyone can't be wearing a big sign that says, "Shoot me!"), but some bad guys are too subtle to be noticed. Fourth, and most frustrating of all, many of the targets are way too tiny. **You better hope your light gun is extremely accurate**, and you better sit about two feet from the TV. If not, some of those tiny, hard-to-kill guys will drive you absolutely nuts (especially those that carry a million shots to kill and "save friends who are shooting you at the same time). Save your energy for something better; JO isn't worth straining your trigger finger on.

Dan

Maybe two years ago this would've been at the pinnacle of mediocrity. Now though, in light of other games that handle the genre infinitely better, **it's fortunate to fail just this side of terrible.** The backgrounds are well-rendered but mushy, the character design is rigid, and the whole thing falls miserably to convey the action of a classic English character. Add to that a sluggish fire and you have tired and ultimately sad first game.

John D

I was never a big fan of Area 51 or Maximum Force, and seeing as how **Judge Dredd is a third-rate ripoff** of those lame shooters, I like this game even less. Its klunky graphics are cluttered, making it hard to see targets. The developers apparently noticed this problem, too, because it now points out targets in text boxes. The tacked-on FMV story is pointless and certainly no incentive to keep playing. Worst of all, it's frustratingly hard.

Crispin

Yawn. With games like Time Crisis and Point Blank out there, I can't imagine anyone but the hardest of the hardcore Judge Dredd fans (if they even exist) would want to play this game. The random backgrounds don't mix well with the characters, making targets hard to pick, and the collision detection is poor. Add to that short, boring stages and cheesy FMV and you get an dreadful (in every sense) light-gun shooter.

John R

VISUALS 6 SOUND 5 INGENUITY 2 REPLAY 3

Number Of Players: 1-2

Best Feature: Multiplayer Gameplay

Worst Feature: Slow Single-Player Game

www.activision.com

NBA SHOOTOUT 98



Publisher: SCEA
Developer: Sony Interactive Studios
Featured in: EGM #103

When I played the previewable version of this game, I was optimistic. All of the ingredients seemed to be in place, but the gameplay needed some tweaking. Unfortunately, **Shootout 98 didn't come together the way I thought it would.** In fact, there's a whole lot of things about this game that bug me, so let me just spell them out in no particular order: All the players look ridiculously thin (Shaq, etc.), in fact, most of them make supermodel Kate Moss look overweight. The control/button layout is unintuitive, and (strangely) there's no option to configure it. You can repeatedly hit the spin button rapidly to make it to the hoop for a layup or a dunk. I think they tried to counterbalance this by allowing the defense to steal the ball (so easy to do) and by making lay-ups and dunks hard to make. In fact, I don't think I've ever seen more blocked lay-ups, blown easy shots or more broken-up dunks than in a game of **Shootout 98.** The 3D graphics are pretty smooth, but there are annoying bits of slowdown, especially when you play with more than two players. Also, some of the animations seem to happen at the wrong time, such as a finger roll three-point attempt I witnessed. These problems are only a complaint, but we think you get the idea that this is a very disappointing hoops game.

Kraig

Shootout 98 is somewhat improved over last year's game, but there are still some problems in key areas. Defense is unrealistic (backing and stealing are far too easy), and multiplayer—which is why most of us play sports games in the first place—is not very much fun at all. You can spin through just about anyone, working down gameplay tremendously. Icon Cutting is a good addition, but **Shootout** still needs work.

John R

For me 50 off seems a lot like last year's game. The improvements seen in **NBA 98 98** seem to be incremental, which is not a particularly bad thing. While the polygonal players are a bit too skinny looking, we can maybe assume they were stream-lined to speed up the gameplay by about 50 off plays fast. With that, add in the Ice Cream Cup and more, there's not really much for me to complain about.

Kelly

Unlike last year's game, **Shootout 98** is quite challenging. Sadly it's for all the wrong reasons. **Player confrontations are required to hit turbo and shoot simultaneously.** What's worse is it's not configurable! So in the game, it's such a tendency to slow down it doesn't matter much. Steals and blocks are so important it's comical. To top it off a couple of cheap maneuvers will save and over again. Disappointing to say the least.

Shui

VISUALS 6 SOUND 6 INGREDIENCY 6 REPLAY 6

NEED FOR SPEED III



Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Electronic Arts
Featured in: EGM #104

Need for Speed III: Hot Pursuit. Is it an ultra-realistic sim like the first? A cartoony-looking arcade chug like the second? Neither! Forget about stacking it up to previous additions. **Hot Pursuit** is a whole new ball game. If I had to draw comparisons, this game has the push-drawing graphics of V-Rally, the smooth frame-rate of Test Drive 4, and gameplay similar to Cart World Series with one exception—incredible power-sliding. Cutting loose the back end via the hand brake is as entertaining as it is effective. It's actually one of the top attributes of the game. Many of the speed-friendly tracks were designed with long sweeping curves that lend themselves perfectly to a well-placed power-slide. Get it right and it's poetry in motion. No longer plagued with poor car control (see NFS II), mastering many of the eight remarkably long courses becomes an obsession which, to me, is the mark of a good racer. As for depth and options, the game is loaded but not without some minor dings. Pursuit Mode turns out to be more novelty than anything else. Getting rid of the road by Kamikaze cars gets straight really quick. Two-player play is so-so, though. As for Practice Mode, it's obvious a lot of thought was put into making NFS III and the result is a quality rework of the once prestigious **Need For Speed** name.

Sushi

Finally, a good NFS sequel! Presumably, EA learned from the mistakes made in every NFS game since the 3D0 debut and finally did out the complete racing package. The 3D graphics are fantastically first-rate, and live up to the spectacular surprises that it gives the game. Just about every play option you could imagine is included, making the gameplay unbelievably so. Really! In fact, it's good to see the NFS franchise back on track.

Kraig

While I enjoy a good race car sim, when it comes to stress cars, I prefer arcade style gameplay. **NFS III has everything I look for in a street racer and more.** Detailed 3D environments, a Super fast sense of speed, sublimely controlled cars of variety, cool-looking cars, it's all here for the taking. My only gripe is with the super-cheap AI. Disband NFS's sim heads might want to look elsewhere. Everybody else, slip me a 4.

Kelly

Because of the recent drought of decent arcade races, I wasn't expecting much from NFS III. As you can tell from my score, I am pleasantly surprised. This game has just about everything I'm looking for in a racing game: graphics, lots of cars and tracks, solid controls and smooth animation. The different modes of play (two-player, Pursuit, etc.) give NFS III excellent replay value. All around, this is a very good title worth your dough.

Dan

VISUALS 8 SOUND 7 INGREDIENCY 7 REPLAY 8

REBOOT



Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA Canada
Featured in: EGM #104

Here's what bugs me about **Reboot**: Even with its good graphics, nice control and well-designed levels, the game remains sadly repetitious. It's hard to believe, with all of the good points that stick out, but it's true. **Why does it have to be this way? Reboot could've been so good!** Here's how it breaks down: A level has you mending tears that the head bad guy sends out. In between taking care of these, you must explore the environments to find three key cards. While you're doing this, you can take out bad guys and collect power ups. Once you find all of the key cards, and take care of any unreminded tears, the exit opens up and you're done. Guess what the next level has you doing? You guessed it, mending more tears, etc. Granted the surroundings change, the levels become increasingly tough to navigate through and larger amounts of enemies fill the screen, but level after level of nearly the same thing becomes extremely tedious. On the positive side, the levels are truly 3D, in that you can pretty much go anywhere. A well-placed jump can land you on top of structures seemingly unreachable. **Wow, hidden power-ups!** But even with this freedom of movement, the levels still have a path you should follow to complete them. It looks good and controls well, but I savored **Reboot** less.

Shawn

This is an admirable attempt at capturing the spirit of the TV series, mainly due to the excellent quality of the visuals. That said though, the gameplay doesn't offer anything particularly new. You glide around 3D locations, shooting bad guys and performing set tasks. **Yipes—never seen that before.** Control gets a bit weird in places and the camera's a habit of getting in the way. The weapons do look cool, though.

John D

Reboot just annoyed the heck out of me. Maybe it's just me, but I spent more time jerking with the sluggish play control and jerky camera movements than I did destroying my enemies. This could have been **Reboot** if interesting enough but the execution is a bit lackluster. This would have been a pretty cool game with more fine-tuning. An analog pad helps somewhat, but it's not enough to save this stink, eh.

Kelly

If you're a fan of the TV show, you'll be pleased to know that EA really strikingly recreated **Reboot's** atmosphere. The game has some cool elements, such as the fully 3D landscapes that blend in with your fancy rock-pop-rock "skateboard." The polygonal graphics are detailed, and movie quality sound is. Unfortunately, **Reboot** got too tedious and boring once you get over the novelty of shooting around in this 3D world.

Kraig

VISUALS 7 SOUND 6 INGREDIENCY 6 REPLAY 5

Number Of Players: 1-4

Best Feature: Fast Fluid 3D Graphics

Worst Feature: Fuzzy Gameplay

www.ea.com

Number Of Players: 1-4

Best Feature: Awesome Power-Sliding

Worst Feature: Overdone Pursuit Mode

www.ea.com

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Large 3D Levels

Worst Feature: Same Thing In Each Level

www.ea.com

SAGA FRONTIER



Publisher: SCEA
Developer: Square
Featured in: EGM #104

Number Of Players: 1

If you look at *Saga Frontier* purely in terms of its bang for the buck, this innovative RPG can't be beat. You get seven separate adventures for seven lead characters (whom you pick at the game's outset), and each quest lasts about 15 hours. Surprisingly, the seven plots are quite different from each other — thanks to the game's huge world to which packs everything from castles to cyberspace. But don't expect *Resident Evil* 2-style interminglings of the stories when you play with a different character; each world has a self-contained adventure. The huge world needed for all these stories does create one problem — *Saga Frontier* is too non-linear. I got side-tracked a few times when I battled through a dungeon that turned out only to be pertinent to another character's story. Difficulty varies wildly between characters, too. But these are minor gripes. The graphics — a mix of pre-rendered backgrounds and sprite characters — are often on par with FFVII (although, like in FFVII, it's often difficult to discern a path through the background). *Saga Frontier's* combat system is especially innovative. Forget about HP Points (which recharge after each battle); you must save (inexpensive) Potions, which are used to unleash more powerful attacks. You can also chain party members' attacks for spectacular combos.

Crispin

Saga Frontier's seven quests make it hard to resist for RPG fans, but regardless of that, it's a very solid game. Aside from some of the gorgeous magic attacks, the graphics are substandard (rendered backgrounds are bad enough, but mix in poorly animated sprites and you have the definition of "ugly"), but the music is great and the gameplay (both combat and puzzles) is fun. If you don't mind lots of battles (sadly, you'll really enjoy it).

John R

Saga Frontier is an RPG to play. It may not have incredible FMV or crazy polygonal graphics, but what it lacks in aesthetics it makes up for in originality and story line. I love the fact that you can be different characters with completely separate plots, and that all flow each at his/her stories intertwine. On the down side, I wish the battles weren't so frequent, and that the graphics in some weren't so two-dimensional.

Shawn

There's a lot to like about *Saga Frontier*, especially the variety of characters and weapons. In fact, each one has his/her own quest. The weapon effects are outstanding, and the attack system is that tactical combos you love best. But strangely enough, a big ailment in this obvious lack of character animation during combat. I mean, can they do better than two freestanding limbs from these aesthetic nicks, this is a solid RPG.

Kraig

VISUALS 7 SOUND 7 INGENUITY 8 REPLAY 8

SHADOW MASTER



Publisher: Pyrosius
Developer: Hammerhead
Featured in: EGM #101

Number Of Players: 1

Shadow Master looks fantastic but just ends up being slightly more than average.

Granted, the game has a load of different enemies, nicely designed levels and fancy cinematics, but I always find myself saying, "Oh, this type of thing again." Another possible problem to be weary of is the overall feel of the game. It's obvious that it's a Quake-ish type of game, but unlike Quake you're inside a heavily armored vehicle. Because of this, the control comes off as being weird. It took me some time to get used to the way the craft moves. And if you don't get used to the control, the next problem may be even worse. The game only allows you to save every low level or so, once a "world" is taken care of. This translates into long frustrating hours sitting in your bedroom all by yourself. Besides the saving thing and goofy control, one more little problem exists: the doors. When you get close to them, they open. As you back away, they close. Now if an enemy lies behind the door, you're sure to get blasted every time you try to enter. Where's the strategy?

Undoubtedly, the best things about SM are the graphics. The nice and snazzy blue and red are some of the nicest on the PlayStation. In fact, even though they're polygonal they actually break up or become pixelated at close range, and the music plain rocks.

Shawn

In the eye candy department, *Shadow Master* truly delivers. The nifty lighting effects and detailed environments draw you in at first, but gameplay-wise, SM is not so appealing. Although the game has an auto-aim feature, the fantastic bugs and wild sounds around so much, it's a challenge just to shoot a simple enemy let alone drive in a straight line. In the end, SM comes across as more of a graphics showcase than a fun game.

Kelly

Ok... I'm so angry at this game. It only lets you save every few levels, meaning if you die, you could lose a lot of progress (which happened to me). Also, where's the mapping system? What's with the misleading sound FX? (The sound is way cool, but for some reason, it always sounds like you're surrounded by enemies.) Your vehicle also tends to get stuck in certain areas. This game is a show case for cook technology, nothing more.

Dan

Shadow Master looks good, sounds good, plays horribly. Enemies are everywhere, popping up around each bend and behind every door — and they always nail you, no matter how much you strafe or jump. Where's the fun in playing a game in which it's impossible to dodge enemies? You don't really see any variety in the missions until after the third level — but that's also when the difficulty curve shoots through the roof.

Crispin

VISUALS 8 SOUND 7 INGENUITY 5 REPLAY 4

SPEED RACER



Publisher: Jaleco
Developer: Graphic Research Company Ltd.
Featured in: EGM #102

Number Of Players: 1

When I first booted up *Speed Racer* and witnessed a perfect re-creation of the TV series intro, I knew I was in for a good time. As expected, *Speed Racer* is a blast. At first, I thought the game was nothing more than *Ridge Racer* with gadgets and a cool license. My initial suspicions were only half correct; the journey turned out to be much more enjoyable and less derivative than I first expected. Although there are only three tracks to choose from, there are lots of shortcuts and hidden areas in the game which can only be accessed by certain cars. While this is nothing new to racing games, the way it's implemented in SR is both challenging and fun. Although some of the techniques required to win the later races are a bit too demanding for my tastes, at least it's not impossible. The graphics are about par for the PlayStation. There is no slowdown or pop-up to speak of and the control is very responsive. Another cool little detail is how the techno version of the *Speed Racer* theme (done by the group Alpha Team) is played during replays. Some of the voice samples are annoyingly repetitive ("Here, catch him!"), but it's no big deal. For me, SR is appealing in that it offers a solid (albeit straightforward) driving experience, combined with a campy, cartoon-like personality.

Kelly

"Here it comes, here comes *Speed Racer*." It's a yury bad deal. It's a bad deal and it's going to really piss off someone. The game is not short so you better be careful. After wasting your money you might be tearful. And when you beat it in 30 minutes, and there's nothing more, you... but your life! you'll want to... nothing is gone. My *Speed Racer*, no *Speed Racer*, no *Speed Racer*, no! The game is clean, don't waste time on this game!

Dan

After the warm fuzzies wore off from seeing vintage *Speed Racer* clips, I began to get bored with this retro run. While *Speed* doesn't suffer too much from my one malady, it's just so good and simple to warrant my praise. With variations of one-track being the most of the game, I already learned the shortcuts and won consistently. Furthermore, the graphics appear to be a few years behind compared to what's available now.

Sushi

If one morning you got up and said, "I want to buy a really average racing game," *Speed Racer* would be the game for you. This title provides all of an hour's worth of fun and then it's beat. Sure, some secret cars are unlocked and you can beat your existing times, but how long is that going to last? On top of this, the *Speed Racer* license costs more or less tacked on, and there's a noticeable amount of pop-up.

Shawn

VISUALS 6 SOUND 6 INGENUITY 5 REPLAY 6

Best Feature: Seven Different Quests

Worst Feature: Too Non-linear

www.playstation.com

Best Feature: Incredible Graphics

Worst Feature: No Individual Level Saves

www.ps1.jaleco.com

Best Feature: Cool Gadgets/Speed Racer Theme

Worst Feature: Rehashed Gameplay

www.jaleco.com

TRIPLE PLAY 99



Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Canada
Featured in: *EGM #95*

OK, first—the good stuff: Triple Play's overall presentation and feel are top-notch. If I were reviewing the game based on presentation alone, it'd get a so, easily. From the intro to the game interface to the menu graphics and sound effects—everything is done perfectly. The play-by-play is astoundingly good (even better than NHL 98), and the crowd interaction is without a doubt the best I've ever heard. Also, the stat tracking is second to none. You can play as entire career and track the stats of every player, and the game will even bring up interesting stats from time to time based on your overall playing experience. Impressive. Now, the bad stuff. The otherwise excellent game play of TPlay is marred by one severe problem—the frame-rate. It's so choppy that it not only makes the game look bad, but it affects fielding, often resulting in botched plays. There are some minor problems too, like base runners going too fast (making double plays unrealistically infrequent), but nothing truly drastic. Overall it's too bad though, because if the game played smoother, it'd be nearly flawless. I'm still very pleased, but this one glaring problem really does affect play and absolutely needs to be fixed next time around. As it stands, Triple Play 99 is a very good game that could've and should've—been great.

John R

I don't think I've ever seen a sports game loaded with so many cool options, but with such flawed gameplay. This is like playing baseball in mud. The erratic from-rice and choppy player animations make it difficult to field and judge pitching spots (among other things). The slow, deep stabs, features and sound (particularly the two-man commentary) are great, but I don't think you're far from this game not being fun to play.

Kraig

We've all played games like this before: games that look sharp standing still, but once you see them in action...forget about it! Triple Play 99 suffers from near-God-awful frame-rates which adversely affects how the game plays and to a lesser extent how it controls. The stadium look nice, the play-by-play is awe-inspiring, and the game is extremely easy to get into. The poor animation, however, keeps the game from standing.

Dan

Triple Play 99 could bring around the warm feeling of the warmtime ball play with its decent graphics, interesting and funny commentary and slick interface, but the game's choppy animation and graphics remind me all too much of the old, cold winter. If you can manage to overlook the animation, you're left with a fun baseball game with a load of options, and a good number of modes of play like Two-player Mode for the bases.

Shawn

CASTLEVANIA LEGENDS



Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Featured in: *N/A*

It's an overwhelmingly average addition to the Castlevania saga which fails to excel in any particular area. Yet again you jump from platform to platform, killing bad guys and collecting objects with no apparent use. But what's this? Unless I'm mistaken the game uses almost exactly the same engine Castlevania III Belmont's Revenge made use of. No wonder! It all looks so familiar. The main antagonist may be a woman this time, but aside from a gender swap there's little here to differentiate CL from its predecessors. The level design is unimpressive at best (left-right scrolling, jumpy-jumpy action prevailing throughout) with attacks coming from bats, snakes and zombies, each with predictable attack patterns. Even the now-familiar whip power-ups offer little excitement in the quagmire of mediocrity. It's a shame really; GB game design has come along so far in recent years but it seems that Castlevania has failed to catch up. Even the Bosses fail to spice things up: learn their fairly simple attacks and you can sail through each confrontation relatively unscathed. Doesn't look good, does it? Well, trust me this is some fairly copy-paste detection (grabbing ropes and avoiding spikes is a bit of a nit-pick), and you have something that can only be described as a disappointment. Such a shame.

John D

The Castlevania series has made huge strides on every console but the Game Boy. While this newest instalment packs the basic Castlevania ingredients (familiar monsters and level design, etc.), it's too short, and the control is often unhelpful. I died too many times simply because I missed what should have been a simple jump. At least you get a decent glimpse of the Castlevania theme—something I missed in SOUL.

Crispin

Legends is moderately amusing for the three or four hours it takes you to play through it, but overall I think it could've been much better. The game's engine is archaic (it's the same one, more or less, as the GB Castlevanias from seven or eight years ago), and there just isn't much depth to the gameplay at all. The Standard/Fight Mode idea is nice, but other way—with just five stages, you'll be done with this one in a max. day or two.

John R

I can sum up this game in two words that go together all too well: short and easy. The game may give you a standard Castlevania-type adventure with its spooky levels, music and inventory system, but that's about where it ends. This instalment in the Castlevania series is best suited as a training course for aspiring Castlevania gamers. If you've never played a Castlevania game and wanted to learn the basics, this will help.

Shawn

WARIO LAND II



Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
Featured in: *N/A*

Wario Land II demonstrates how coupling traditional side-scrolling gameplay with a few new ideas can work wonders. Wario Land II reminds me of so many old-school platformers, yet it's like nothing I've seen before. The primary feature that sets this game apart from others before it is your Invincibility. You can't die in this game; you simply get squashed, set on fire, tutted at and a whole host of other unfortunate conditions. The cool part? You can use these malades to your advantage to access secret areas (for example, fat Wario can break special blocks). I can't recall a recent game where I wanted to get hit by enemies. Speaking of secret areas: They're everywhere. Eventually, I was driven to obsession trying to find every coin in every level so I could play the minigames. I have two minor complaints. First, some secret areas seem impossible to get to (I could see them, just couldn't visit them—maybe I just lack the skill). Second, the game should've included more than just the two minigames. But overall, Wario Land II is a very satisfying experience. It's fun and full of replay value. It's a side-scrolling platform jumper, not puzzle solving (and I mean HOURS...this game is huge). Wario Land II may go down as one of the finest titles the Game Boy has to offer.

Dan

This is easily one of my favorite platforms on a GB. Controlling the grumpy hero is a joy throughout and the non-linear and varied gameplay was enough to keep me wandering the entire, GB in hand, trying to get to the next chapter. What better recommendation do you want? Best of all, the Bosses are cool and there's so much variety to the creatures that you encounter. A refreshing change from the pattern-based norm.

John D

If you're going to take the time out to sit down and play a game on a tiny screen, you might as well have fun doing it. That's where Wario Land II comes in. Games like this make owning a Game Boy well worth it. Sure, the graphics are pretty good for the GB, but that's not what makes this one a winner. Wario Land II gives you gameplay that great games are made of. Don't overlook this one just because it's on a handheld.

Shawn

Wario Land II is the first "must-own" Game Boy game of 1998, and frankly, it's one of my favorite Game Boy games to date. Fans of the old Mario platforms, where exploration is emphasized and secrets abound at every turn, are going to be in love with this warty, VERY nicely designed game. The levels are huge, the varied gameplay is top-notch, the minigames are cool. I honestly have no complaints at all. Great game.

John R

VISUALS 6 SOUND 9 INGENUITY 7 REPLAY 8

VISUALS 5 SOUND 6 INGENUITY 4 REPLAY 5

VISUALS 7 SOUND 6 INGENUITY 8 REPLAY 8

Number Of Players: 1-8

Best Feature: Amazing Presentation

Worst Feature: Choppy Frame Rate

www.easports.com

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: It's Castlevania Game

Worst Feature: It's A Boring One

www.konami.com

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Lots Of Techniques

Worst Feature: It Will Suck Hours Out Of Your Life

www.nintendo.com

www.video

**ELECTRONIC
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Official
U.S.
PlayStation
Magazine

games.com

It's All You Need To Know



May 1998

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PlayStation/SCEA
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PlayStation/Namco
- GoldenEye 007**
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- Bloody Roar**
PlayStation/SCEA

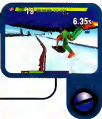
PLAYSTATION

- Need For Speed III**
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HOW TO READ THE TOP 10 CHART

53 **Name of Game**

Publisher's Name

↑ Editor's Choice Award

↑ # Consecutive Months On The Chart

↑ Rank Number

GAMING MOMENT

Run for your lives! NFL Blitz puts Crispin on the blitz

Fresh off a touchdown and deep into third-period overtime on the office NFL Blitz machine, Crispin—pitted against Blitz guru John Ricciardi—opted to go for the two-point conversion for the win rather than settle for the free point and a tie game. He picked a simple slant-right running play, zinged it to a running back, then fumbled a mere yard from the goal line after spinning one too many times. Crispin's response: He picked up the orange safety cone we keep near the machine—dubbed the Cone of Violence for just such occasions—and lobbed it through a closet door.



JUMP START

Strategies To Get You Started On The Hottest Games

Gex: Enter the Gecko

Gex returns to the video game scene with an all-new adventure that takes place in 3D. The object of the game is to collect the remotes hidden inside each of the levels.

There are four kinds of remotes: red, gold, collectible silver and secret silver. The red remotes are the basic ones you collect for money. Completing one of the level objectives, the gold remotes are received for the completion of a Boss stage or a bonus round. The collectible remotes are grabbed whenever you pick up all three tiers of pick-ups in a given level. In each main level there is one secret remote. These are hidden pretty well, and most of your game time will be spent looking for them.

There is a reason to keep looking for all of the remotes and to eat: through all the

exits. If you do, you'll be able to get an extra-special ending. This ending will show lots of behind-the-scenes stuff, as well as reveal the top reasons that it's cool to be a gecko.

So happy hunting!



Utilizing Gex's abilities

The tail spring: By bouncing on your tail, you can reach greater heights. Not only that, but you can also make your way past the towering obstacles (like conveyor belts) without being affected by them. Flying enemies like the bees are easy killed with a simple bounce.

Whip it good:

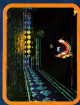
Gex's tail whip has more uses than just

smacking enemies. The tail can also be used to pick up items, whenever you're in a group of collectables, whip your tail to gather up more than one quickly. This is a must for the bonus rounds.

Karate Kick:

If you hold down the R2 button while running and jumping, you can do a karate kick. This will send you further than just jumping.

1



Monster pickups:

You can get up to 12 pick-ups from killing Frankensteinfeld. To do this, obtain the fire power-up. Then whip the monster until he crumbles. Move circle around each individual piece for the goodies.

Whipping lets you pick up multiple collectables at once.

By EGMP's Andrew Barran

Secret Remotes

2

Out of Town: Make your way to the waterfall and bounce up the rainbow rings. Once you're on top, head left and follow the path to an icy area.

Small Raizer: In front of the first exit is a moat. Drop down inside, and you find this remote.

Frankensteinfeld: Enter the red door and look for a red portal and the left-hand wall. The remote is inside it. (A)

WWW.Dotcom.COM: Look for it on a computer chip near the tower exit.

Also See Tongue: Enter the first building on the left. In the second room, there is a door on the upper right-hand side. Spring off the stairs (ring the gong to make them appear) to get there.

The Umpire Strikes Out: From the start, turn around and head down the backward path. Keep going until you see an asteroid with a lone radar dish. Destroy the dish to reveal a UFO. Ride it down to a secret area. (B)

Pangloss pezzo: Circle around the volcano until you reach an arch with a life box on it. Look down, to catch a glimpse of the remote.

Fire Tuning: Look behind the castle for this hard-to-find item. (C)

This Old Care: The remote is on a ledge near the Steam Warts exit.

Kooney, I Shrink the Gecko: At the junction where you see two powered droids, look up.

Poltexes: In the room with the jallicals, push all the coffins into the slots. The remote is in the cell that opens up.

Pain in the Asteroids: Jump through the wormhole. The remote is in the open.

Samurai Night Fever: Enter the Ancient Chinese Secret area (head right from the start). There will be a texture you can cling to if you fall from the side of the wall. (D)

No Weddings and a Funeral: When you ride the spawnee after the first disco room, head to the right to find the remote in a niche.



See issues 45 & 46 for more strategy on Gex.

EGMP

The Secret Levels

3

The Secret Levels: There are three hidden levels, and they are opened up when you collect the gold remotes. To find where they are, you must climb the arch that stretches past the area where you start.

The Secret Clackers: Hidden inside each of the secret levels is a movie clacker. When you beat the level after picking up the clacker, you'll be treated to a special cinema.



Climb up the side of the big barrel for the clacker.



Look inside the big stairway in the second level.



THE LOST GIZ TAPES

MechaRez

How to Defeat MechaRez: Wreak the buildings by your immediate surroundings by tail whipping them. When Rez leaps atop a building, level it with your tail. This will give you time to get a few hits on the Boss. Rez will also attempt to fly at you. Try to keep a building between you and him, or you won't be able to dodge.

When he rains into a tower, he gets stunned. Now you can hit him more.



Fly Houses

Need More Life? The orange houses with white roofs hold lives. Whip them whenever you're low on life. There are four houses throughout the city.



Clacker #3

After the climbable wall, head straight. When you get to the second junction, head to the right and jump across the pit. Race the elevator that you find. This'll carry you to the maze roof. Turn around from where you are, and use a Karate kick to propel yourself across the pit. The remote is on the pedestal.



Gilligex Boss

4

How to Defeat the Three Bosses: Three savages stand around a pot and shoot three fireball blasts. Two of the blasts will be red and one will be blue. Whip the blue ball at the center savage. This should kill him, and trigger the next type of attack. Now, after every blast, two rows of fire will wash across the floor. Dodge the fire until you can whip another blue blast at another Boss. Once the second Boss is down, the third will skip around. Wait for the blue ball to be in the center of the three shots, then whip it into the center of the final battle's Winning round! Winning more levels.



Whip the blue balls at the Bosses.



Mooshoo Pork

5

How to Mooshoo Pork: Lure Mooshoo Pork away from the switch and run around the table. Run all the way around and whip the switch. This will zap him. When MP pulls the switch, two beams of electricity will spread from the center of the room. Jump over the bolts, and lure Mooshoo again. After zapping the Boss for the third time, the strates over the two side pits will blow away. All it takes is one more hit, just make sure you don't fall into the glowing charms.



Lure Mooshoo Pork. Then whip the switch.

The Final Encounter: Rez

6

Rez's First Form: Rez will fling himself toward Gaz and attempt to ram him. If you stand near a wall, and dodge at the last moment, Rez will stun himself. Tail whack Rez and he'll spin into the electricity. After flying himself, the camera will switch to Rez's perspective. Now, you must dodge the shots that he fires. Remember, the explosions can hurt Gaz, so keep moving. After exactly three hits, the Boss will reveal his last and most terrifying form.



Rez's Final Form: Rez grows to giant proportions. Wait for him to swing his huge arms, and jump over him. The number of times he swings is dependent on how much you've hit him. After his swings, start running, or you'll get zapped by an eye laser. Start running toward a green pedestal as soon as it appears. Now try to trick Rez into bashing it with his fist. Rez will begin pounding as soon as the laser ends, so get to that pedestal! Three hits needed.





Ghost in the Shell

LEVEL SELECT, ANIMATION SELECT AND HIDDEN PICTURE

At the Main Menu Screen, enter the following code to get access to all the levels: R2, R1, Square, Square, Up, Down, Square, Square, R2.



At the Main Menu Screen, enter the code as listed here.

R2. You will hear a tone to confirm the code worked. Now press Start on "Mission Start" and you will be able to choose any of the 12



In the Options, go to the Movie Replay Option for all cinema!

missions available to you. Also, you can go to "Options" and then go to



Press Start and you will be faced with a Mission Select Screen!

the Movie Replay Option. Here you can play any of the cinemas from the game! To access a hidden picture, you must defeat the game without using any continues. The final cinema will play, followed by the staff credits. If you are patient enough to wait for this to end, you'll be rewarded with a full-size picture of Motoko Kusanagi.

Speed Racer

ALL CARS, COURSE SELECT CODES, ETC.



These tricks will give you some cool, new options: Access All Cars - At the Car Select Screen, press and hold these buttons in this order:



On this screen, do the codes and you'll see the colors change.

R3+R2+L1+L2+Select+Down+Triangle. Now let go and scroll Left or Right to see all the extra cars you can choose.

Course Select Codes - At the Course Select Screen, do these codes: Night Only Race - Hold R3+R2 and press the X button. Day Only Race - Hold L1+L2 and press the X button.

Dusk Only Race - Hold R3+R2+L1+L2 and press the X button.

Two Extra Views - During a race, press Start to pause the game. Press Right five times, then Left five times. Unpause the

game and use the zoom buttons to get additional views. Smash the Start (Check) Sign - Activate the Rotary Saws on either the Mach 5 or the Demon. Then use the Auto Jacks to attack the sign.



The Mach 5 or Demon can destroy the sign with the Saws and Jacks.



On this screen, do the code and move left or right to see the cars.



Get extra views by doing that code while the game is paused.

Bust-A-Move 3

ANOTHER WORLD

At the Title Screen, when "Press Button to Start" is flashing, press A, Left, Right, A. A tiny picture of the final Boss will appear in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. When you begin the One-player Mode, you will have activated Another World!



In the game, press Start to pause, and then hold the L2 or the R2 buttons. Using the legend, spell out the words as shown using the correct buttons for various results. You will hear a sound to confirm the code: UNDEAD=Infinite lives. WEASEL=Invulnerability. RELEASE=Level Select. ALOUD=One-liners (press Select to hear them). SENSELESS=Rambling GEX



site that contains most of the hints shown here!

Gex: Enter the Gecko

MANY INCREDIBLE CODES

Use this legend to figure out the commands for the tricks in Gex: Up=U or N, Down=D or S, Left=L or W, Right=R or E, Triangle button=A, Circle button=O, X button=X.



Pause and enter the codes while holding the L1 or R2 button.



Enter the special RELEASE code to get a Level Select Menu!



Go to the level called www.dot-com.com and get to the 7 mark.



Hit the 7 mark with your tail to reveal a special Web site!

Critical Depth

INFINITE WEAPONS, DROP POD

Here are a couple of codes for this killer game. To execute any of these codes you must be in the game, but do not pause it. You will have to be quick when you enter these codes to get them to work: Infinite Weapons: L1, R1, L1, R1, Up, Down, Left, Down. Drop Pod: L1, R1, L1, R1, Up, Down, Left, Up.



Make sure you don't pause the game when you enter these codes.

Extreme-G

PROGRAMMERS' FACES

Go to the Bike Selection Screen and press the R button to get to the Controls Screen. Move up and access the "Name" Option. Clear the current name and enter XGTEAM as the name. Press XTEAM and you will hear a confirming sound that the trick worked. Now go back



In Shoot-'Em-Up Mode, you will be chasing a bunch of the faces!

Shoot 'Em-Up Mode, you will be chasing multiple copies of your chosen face!



Clear the current name and enter XGTEAM in its place.

is and enter one of the programmer's names: GREG, JUSTIN, SHAWN, ASH or JOHN. In Practice or Time Trials Mode, you will see your face of choice on the top of the bike as you race. In



Put in one of the programmer's names to be riding is him!



GameShark Codes



ARMORED CORE
Hidden Abilities
8008720004
80099200004

AUTO DESTRICT
Infinite Armor
80088600800

GEX: ENTER THE GECKO
Have All Remotes
80097550707
80097550707
80097560707
80097562077
80097564077
80097566077

RAY TRACERS
Infinite Nitro
80058400386

RESIDENT EVIL 2 (CLAIRE)
L3+L4 Health Restore
d00c623c0005
800c74200c8
RESIDENT EVIL 2 (CLAIRE)
L3+Triangle For Grenade Launcher
d00c623c0004
800c930ff09
RESIDENT EVIL 2 (CLAIRE)
L3+X For Grenade Launcher (Fire)
d00c623c0004
800c930ff0a
RESIDENT EVIL 2 (CLAIRE)
L3+Square For Grenade Launcher
(Aim)
d00c623c0004
800c930ff0b

80097568077
800975720300
80097574077
80097580fff
800975820ff
80097584fff
80097586fff

MARCH MAD-
NESS '98
Full Momentum
Home Team
800808980064
MARCH MAD-
NESS '98
Full Momentum
Away Team
800808980000

RESIDENT EVIL 2 (CLAIRE)
L3+Triangle For Bowgun
d00c623c0005
800c930ff0c
RESIDENT EVIL 2 (CLAIRE)
L3+Square For Spark Shot
d00c623c0081
800c930ff0e
RESIDENT EVIL 2 (CLAIRE)
R2+Triangle For Submachine Gun
d00c623c0002
800c930ff0f
RESIDENT EVIL 2 (CLAIRE)
R2+X For Rocket Launcher
d00c623c0042
800c930ff11
RESIDENT EVIL 2 (CLAIRE)
R2+Square For Gatling Gun
d00c623c0082
800c930ff12
RESIDENT EVIL 2 (LEON)
L3+L4 Health Restore
d00c646c0005
800c7e7800c8
RESIDENT EVIL 2 (LEON)
L3+Triangle For Magnum
d00c646c0014
800c6b8ff05
RESIDENT EVIL 2 (LEON)
L3+X For Custom Magnum
d00c646c0044
800c6b8ff06
RESIDENT EVIL 2 (LEON)
L3+Square For Shotgun
d00c646c0084
800c6b8ff07
RESIDENT EVIL 2 (LEON)
L3+Triangle For Custom Shotgun
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RESIDENT EVIL 2 (LEON)
L3+Triangle For Custom Shotgun
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800c6b8ff12

Beast Wars



POWER-UP WEAPONS, MISSION SKIP

There are a couple of tricks you can do while you are in a mission to help you out right from the start. You have to do these codes quickly to pull them off.

To power up weapons: Pause the game, hold L2 and quickly press Up, Down, Left, Right, Triangle, X, Square. Continue to hold L2 and unpause the game.

To complete the current mission:

Pause the game, hold L2 and quickly press Up, Down, Left, Right, Triangle, X, X, Triangle, Right, Left, Down, Up. Continue to hold L2 and unpause the game.



Pause the game and enter one of these codes very quickly!

Bloody Roar

MULTIPLE CHEATS



There are several cheats you can get for this game. Follow the directions for each to get the code. **Big Head:** On "Normal" setting while on the Character Select Screen, hold L2 and choose your fighter with the Circle button.

Large Arena: If you beat 20 opponents in a row in the Survival Mode, you will be able to increase the size of the arena. **Regenerating Life Bars:** Finish the game with Bakuryu on Level Four or above.

Big Arms: Beat the game without continuing on Level Four or above.

Small Fighters: At the Character Select Screen, hold R2 and choose your fighter with the Circle button. **School Girl Alice:** Beat all the opponents in Time Attack Mode in under 30 minutes.



Do the requirements to get the codes such as Big Head to work.

NASCAR 98

VARIOUS GAME CHEATS

There are a few tricks here that will affect the type of car you have or add some kind of effect to it.

EA Sports Car: This trick can only be done in Exhibition Mode. Go to the Race Setup/Car Select Screen and



In Exhibition Mode, you can now race as the cool EA Sports car.

highlight the Kenny Wallace car. Then hold X and press Up and Down. **Faster Car:** To build a faster car you must go into the Car Setup Screen. From there put the pressure all the way up, the wedge all the way down, the rear spoiler all the way down and the gear ratios all the way up.

Pinnacle Car: This trick only works in Exhibition Mode as well. Go to the Race Setup/Car Select Screen and highlight Bobby Labonte's car. Hold X and press Up then Down.

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Get Some!

Cool stuff you could probably live without, but shouldn't



● Board Your Keyboard

Taking interactive to a whole different level, the Millennium Falcon playset from Hasbro lets you take control of the Falcon in the privacy of your own home. By strapping the device to a standard computer keyboard, installing the included software and working the levers and buttons on the miniature cockpit, you can watch your monitor as you cruise around at warp speeds.

Price Around \$50
For More Info
www.hasbrointeractive.com
Phone (800) 400-1352

● A Whole Lotta Manga

McFarlane Toys easily has the coolest action figures on the market today. To keep the ball rolling, they have a load of action figure lines due out this year. Pictured to the left is Manga Samurai Spawn and to the right, Manga Freak, both from Manga Spawn Series 2. Other lines to look for are Spawn Series 11, Movie Maniacs featuring Jason, Freddy Krueger and Eve from the upcoming movie *Species 2*, plus many others. Needless to say, it's time to get your wallets prepped.

Price Around \$15
For More Info www.spawn.com
Phone (888) 99-SPAWN or (888) 997-7296



● It's Never Too Late

The first Resident Evil may have come out more than a year ago, but that isn't stopping Toy Biz from bringing us a whole line of action figures based on characters from the game. And really, we can't say we mind! Each detailed character due out in June comes with different weapons and a monster. Also, look for RE2 figures later this year.

Price Around \$30
For More Info
www.primenet.com/~btm/aft.html
Phone (800) 634-7539



● Chimp Handlers

The idea here is simple: Stick your hand in the chimp's rear and do your best primate impersonation. What could be more fun than that? This app is just one of many in Mask Illusions' line of puppets called Hand Critics. Others include a cat, a buffalo, a rhino and a doctor. They're strange but very cool.

Price Around \$12
For More Info N/A
Phone (800) 266-6275



All of the items in this month's Get Some! are some of the products shown at this year's Toy Fair in New York. Toy Fair is a trade show like E, except it's just for toys. Look for more products from the show in upcoming issues of EGM.



The Final Word

Trouble at the 10 Spot

For the record—and as far as I know—not a single member of the Review Crew has a stick up his butt.

More than a few readers have made that accusation, claiming we're a little too hard on the games we rate. More specifically, they wonder why we don't grant more 10s. After all, it has been more than three years since we've let fly with a perfect score (which went to *Sonic & Knuckles* in issue #64, by the way). What gives? Are we just a bunch of nose-in-the-air cynics who think no game is worthy of our top-of-the-scale ideal?

Of course not. In fact, we'd love to give out more 10s (it'd sure beat playin' stuff like *Fantastic Four* all month long). Trouble is, according to our reviews philosophy, the chances of a game ever reaching the coveted 10 spot are slim at best. We've always held strong to the belief that for a game to earn a perfect score, it has to be...well, perfect. It can't suffer from any slowdown. It can't have any camera problems. It can't be too short, too hard, too easy, too ugly, too salty, too high in saturated fat, too blah, blah, blah. Any flaw, no matter how teeny tiny, has been enough to knock even the best games down to a 9.5.

But while half the staff thinks this policy is all fine and dandy (some even insist that no game'll ever be good enough to cut the perfect-score mustard), the rest feel that a 10 every now and then is a good thing. Such elite games set a standard by which all the 400 or so other titles released each year are judged.

Take *GoldenEye 007* for example. Arguably 1997's best game, *Rare's* masterpiece of first-person boom-

boom came closer to earning a 10 than any other game in recent years. It's revolutionary in its realism. It's easily one of the prettiest games ever. It's an immersive experience that makes it possible to love the *Nintendo 64*, a system that's all too easy to hate. Even better: We still play the hell outta the game.

But then there's *GoldenEye's* slight choopiness in *Four-player Mode*, not to mention a difficulty curve steeper than a rope-free ascent up *Devil's Tower*. Those itchy-bitty gripes alone were enough to knock poor *GoldenEye* from perfect-score contention. And the same story applies to last year's other console wonders. *Resident Evil 2*,

Final Fantasy VII, *Castlemania: SoTn*—all raised the bar in their respective genres, all were considered worthy of a 10 rating by one editor or another, and all suffered from one or two micron-size flaws that barred it from perfect score-dom.

How fair is that? Lately,

we've reconsidered our super-strict policy, and we've come to the conclusion that there's no logic in having a 10-point scale if we're only ever going to use nine of those points. So, from now on, if we review something that sets a new standard, that tops every other game known to mankind, it's going to get the credit it deserves—a 10 rating. (And while we're on the subject, when we come across the worst of the worst, it'll get the score it deserves: a big fat zero. Oh, and please, please remember that five is an average rating, a numerical fact of life that several other game mags apparently fail to realize.)

So what could the next big 10 game be? Trust me—we Review Crew guys face *Zelda 64*, *Tekken 3* and everything else 1998 has to offer completely stick free.



100% Stick Free

by Crispin Boyer

crispin_boyer@zd.com

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Next Month



ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

June 1998



RPGs are booming, and we have more to review such as Sega's Panzer Dragoon Saga.

Even though we've finally presented our big RPG wrap-up, don't worry, there's plenty more on the way. In fact, the EGM Review Crew will put more RPGs to the test such as Breath of Fire III for the PlayStation and the unique Panzer Dragoon Saga for the Saturn. N64 players can also look

forward to plenty of coverage including a massive Turok 2 blowout (next month's cover story), Fighting Force 64, and World Grand Prix. This is in addition to some interesting PlayStation games including MK4 and Red Alert: Retaliation.

Acclaim's Turok 2 is one of the most anticipated N64 games, and EGM will give you the full scoop!



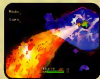
RA: Retaliation is the follow-up to the great PS real-time strategy game.

EGM²

May 1998



Tekken 3 is here and ready to slap you silly—but not if you use our guide. We'll list combos, differences from the arcade and much more.



Our PlayStation role-playing special includes Capcom's Breath of Fire III (above) and Square's multistory epic SaGa Frontier.

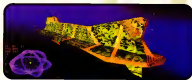


Shred the slopes, dude! A first hands-on guide to Nintendo's 1080° Snowboarding will reveal this game's many secrets...

This month, we showcase two of the hottest fighting games to hit the scene—both from Namco!

First, check out our total blowout of Tekken 3 for the PlayStation. It'll feature a comprehensive moves list, full character analysis and strategy that breaks down all the changes from the arcade version.

Next, chomp on Namco's arcade brawler Ehrgeiz—featuring folks from Final Fantasy VIII! Don't hit the arcades without reading this first! Rounding out the lineup are these hot titles: Dead or Alive, Need for Speed III, Pitfall 3D, MLB 99, Triple Play 99 and, as always, the best list of tricks on the planet!



Which of Colony Wars' six endings was the real one? What the heck does OOT stand for? And how do you control a brick by remote control? Find out from the creators of *Psychosis*: Colony Wars 2, OOT and the ultra-funky *Psybedek*.

It's almost here! The biggest fighter in history—Tekken 3—is ready to explode on PlayStation, and OPM has all the inside info you want to know. Plus, we'll pull no punches naming PlayStation's 50 Greatest Fighters of All Time! Learn from the developers of *Psybedek*, OOT and the mind-blowing *Colony*

Wars 2. Why *Psychosis*' 1998 lineup may be their best to date. As usual, our extensive reviews of *Breath of Fire III*, *Dead or Alive* and *SaGa Frontier* will put all others to shame. Plus, tear into playable demos of *Einhänder*, *Gex*: Enter the Gecko and *Klonoa*. All in the May issue of OPM!

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

May 1998



Side-scrolling Tekken?!?! OPM blows the lid off Tekken 3's brand-new Force Mode—a PlayStation exclusive!

Hot New Titles

Earthworm Jim (US)



F Zero X (J)



US N64 Titles

Mission Impossible

Nycal Ninja 64

NBA in the Zone

Quest 64

Tank 2

**Yoshi's Story



Import N64 Titles

Art of Fighting Twin

F Zero 64

Hybrid Heaven

Kirby's Air Ride

Legend of Zelda

U.S. Saturn Titles

Dead or Alive

Dungeons and Dragons

**Magic Knight RayEarth

Ninja

Zenon (Duke, Road Conflict)



Import Saturn Titles

Beowulf, Gol Act Heroism

The House of the Dead

Kerolosan, Lobot

Princess Maker 2

Sekura Wars 2

Shining Force III - Semiero 2

Super Adventure Rockman

Super Robot War F

Tokki Memorial Drama

Wolvic Pro's 3

World Soccer RPG



Takken 3



Elemental Gear Bolt



US PlayStation Titles

Bloody Roar

Breath of Fire II

Dead or Alive III

Need for Speed III

Nemesis/Heat Racing

Pinet 3D

Point Blank

Power Ball Racing

Rascal

Roadline

Resident Evil 2

Street Fighter II

Street Fighter III

Street Fighter IV

Street Fighter V

Street Fighter VI

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Street Fighter VIII

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Street Fighter XII

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